

Exhibit B



[TITLE]

[GENRE]

Essays

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[WORD COUNT]

~57,600

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~ Preface ~

For those who have been bullied into submission, whether from birth or from some later point . . .

As well as for those who don't feel quite a legitimate part of the families, schools, workplaces, or societies in which they find themselves . . .

And for the *ex mala bonum* . . .

This book is dedicated to you.

By recounting just a few vignettes of my background, which is no more or less interesting than anyone else's, I lay a basis for providing a voice for those in recovery and on healing paths of their own making.

And by credentialing my own journey, I hope that countless other lesser-heard-from Souls feel recognized, at least, and seen, by right of their very existences.

If your voice doesn't support the majority narrative, because it's better served by keeping you silenced, literally, or by imprisonment or through bodily harm . . . there are no doubt thousands to millions of others who would benefit from hearing your stories. And if enough of us emerge from hiding, our voices have the power to trigger Light. Our collective may generate clarity where before there was only cringe and pain.

The essays that follow are intended to be neither perfectly chronological nor complete. Time, to me, is not linear. It just gets stickier. But so long as a few points are conveyed with any sense of clarity, my path from being a baby deemed unlikely to ever walk or talk due to abuse to a currently middle-aged being who walks, talks, thinks, and . . . you be the judge . . . promotes meaningful dialogue, is something of a feat.

When sharing unedited pages from an early version of this manuscript with an old and cherished friend, Kelly, she suggested that the work needed this Preface. First, to explain the lexicon/code I've chosen for the nine blood and non-blood relations referred to in these pages, as follows:

| My nomenclature | Definition | Specific name of person |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Biomère | biological mother | Gloria Drucker Amman |
| Biopère | biological father | Daniel Arthur Dubro (Dan, Danny) |
| Biodemifrère (1 and 2) | biological half brothers, through Dan | Theo Dubro and Richard (last name omitted) |
| Biosœur | biological full-blooded sister | Judy (last name omitted) |
| Adoptomère | mother through adoption, following many foster placements | Gertrude Azeff (Trudi) |
| Adoptopère | father through adoption, following many foster placements | Joel Azeff |
| Adoptofrère (1 and 2) | brothers 1 and 2, through adoption, following many foster placements | Robert and Marc, biological sons of Trudi and Joel |

Second, she thought it wise to share a bit of how it came to pass that I was reunified with each of my biological parents in adulthood, as well to set the scene on how to remain sane while living in a post-truth society, the skills for which I developed (1) in the bootcamp of surviving a post-truth family placement and, later, through (2) my post-truth adult son's unquenchable thirst for money and fame that culminated in a [REDACTED] he had built on a fortress of lies and while bullying and expertly manipulating the media, a neuroscientist, his own live-in girlfriend, me, and no doubt several others. My life to date has

been littered with con artists. As such, I've been conscious – literally, painfully aware of, sensitive to – of the cons in my own genetic and adopted lines, as well as around who thrives in post-truth U.S.

At age 20 years, when I was just over eight months pregnant, hungry, and frightened, I received a call from my adoptomère. On it, she shared for the first time the name of the agency through which I was purchased, as she phrased it, as well as my born-into surname and that I had a full-blooded older sister. She reminded me, too, that my birth mother was clinically insane and that my birth father, equally insane, had killed himself years earlier (two stories she told me time and again and that, as she put it, served as evidence of my own insanity and that she could “lock me up and throw away the key” at any point she wanted). Along with countless other psychological, emotional, medical, economic, sexual, and physical tactics, this threat kept me quiet through the long days I spent in her home . . . and was part of the fuel that has kept me quiet for decades to pass.

A year later, when my son was 11 months old, I decided to write to the agency in Philadelphia, expressing an interest in learning about my biological sister. Evidently, they had already contacted her, as she called me just a month later. Judy, my biosoeur, surprised me by mentioning each of our biological parents by name and, further still, that she had met with both of them, recently. It would appear that our birth father had not committed suicide. It also was clear that my biosoeur had always known about me and that she had established a relationship with each of our biological parents around the time she had turned 18, one living just over the bridge from my homeland, Philadelphia, in Voorhees, New Jersey, the other in Manhattan.

Judy let them each know that she had heard from me and, she reported, they were surprised that my first name remained *Althea*. She gave me their contact information and, after another few years had passed, I decided to reach out to our birth father and, one year after that, to our birth mother. While Judy and I have barely kept in touch in the three decades since connecting, I feel gratitude for the sweetness of the Life she has led since her adoption. Hers was a story with a happy ending.

In *Les Mouches*, Sartre taught us that a child is neither slave nor master to his parents; he is his own freedom. We are born who we are, and we maintain agency over our own identities.

As parents, we are honored to be stewards to our growing beings, caring and guiding but not owning nor over directing.

Neither a scholar nor a pundit, I spin fiber threads in these pages rather than gold. But if you'll bear with me through the journey, you might emerge with a few tools to create your own Joy, your own resilience, and your own Truth.

Or not.

And either is just as okay as neither.¹

¹ “I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood.” Audre Lorde

~ 1 ~

As meditative vehicles, prayers often derive from the depths of our souls, laying bare our deepest emotions.

And as vehicles for growth, regrets can fuel our loftiest goals.

As a child, I had often wished I could have been born a Catholic so I could have confessed my numerous transgressions on an as-needed basis. Raised as a Jew, I had to catalog every misstep throughout each lunar year, hoarding them for Yom Kippur, when they could be released to the G-d concept only then and only in a communal rather than personal way.

But having been born a Mystic, I could transgress human-made Spirit divisions, being free to float among the luminosity of Soul that is woven into so very many of us.

Having been on the fringiest outskirts of any Hebraic-specific community for countless decades now, I only rarely join in a proper minyan or even a synagogue setting, preferring the quiet repose of time spent alone or of getting lost in nature to find Spirit in all of the hidden, non-human made spaces.

Maybe you, too, notice how many people you know seem to pass on Erev Rosh HaShana, when the Book of Life is opened for ten days. You may find yourself marveling this pattern, trying to decode the mysteries around the apparent timing of it all.

You might be found within one particular religious fold or another, or maybe you exist outside of any named spiritual practice at all.

Maybe you are on the outskirts of your own community yet, all the while, Here with me Now.

Maybe we're traversing our own private deserts, seeking the kind of wise counsel that can only be found in solo travel through uncharted woods.

Maybe your private pain is my only path to salvation.

Maybe our Souls have danced near the Other before, along different pathways.

Or maybe we travel in asymptotic curves that take us farther from one another as we approach our own separate truths.

About any one thing, or,

As is more often the case,

About nothing at all.

~ 2 ~

Kaddish for my biomère, Gloria Drucker Amann*I loved her, she loved me not.*

Following the briefest of meetings at birth, the first words she ever said to me upon attempted reunification at age 25, me, 49, her, were unkind about my physical form. Years later, the last spoken words were by phone, from opposite sides of the U.S., screaming that she was being attacked by her husband. Those screams came seven to eight years prior to her passing from lifelong battles with mental illness and a generalized but acute disgust for everyone, as well the complications associated with having lost her union-protected public school librarian job in that nearly same timeframe. While the coroner defined the more proximate, organ-measured causes of death, the truth of it is that Gloria died of a rather protracted suicide that took, depending on how you measure it, either nearly 8 or 69 and 2/3 years to complete.

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמָהּ רַבָּא

My birth mother's passing was revealed to me in a very disturbing dream as she was removing herself from this lifetime.

יְהֵא שְׁמָהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלָם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא

She was a soul of and made from the sooty underbelly of New York City's seemingly source-less gutter system. She was a grit uttered in a roughened accent – not that alluring traffic-infused, packed subway car kind but that unmistakable angry, violent, judgmental . . . the opinions about others' rights to express any thoughts, her criticisms, the marked strut to her walk, the unique way of piecing herself together when she could, as she'd describe it, feel able to "deodorize" herself enough to leave her rent-controlled apartment. She was as blunt as a splinter on a pre-war park bench – not the Central Park kind, more like the pigeon-shat pocket park littered with junkies' needles, torn condoms, and Nathan's hot dog wrappers benches.

But I liked all of those things about her. I accepted her whole package. She was one of those characters that perhaps wouldn't even be allowed, much less able, to live anywhere other than on the island of Manhattan. She belonged only in its uppermost Northern or Southern reaches, but not quite from anywhere in between. SoHo? Sure. Chinatown? Why not. Washington Heights? You bet. But not in the Financial District, not in Times Square, not even in Grand Central Station. Certainly not on the Upper West or East Sides. And not within a mile's radius of the UN. Hell's Kitchen? Maybe, just maybe, pre-gentrification. Definitely not on a north-south

Fifth Avenue bus. You had to hide her from the tourists and, for the 21 years or so of our once-in-a-while acquaintance, I had remained a faceless tourist to her.

The first time I ever met Gloria, standing in the doorway of her non-working husband's SoHo artist studio, she looked me up and down, millimeter by millimeter, twice slowly with palpable disdain, and said, "Oh, *heh-heh*, you're not as fat as I thought you'd be." And then she proceeded to snicker, having so fully pleased herself with that well-delivered first insult. I was just shy of 5'3" and weighed 128. "And what's with all of that hair? It's so . . . red, is it, auburn, chestnut, what is that . . . oh, right, you're definitely Danny's." And, just to provide her full disappointed assessment, "Is there even room for a brain under there?"

There was no, "It's nice to meet you," or even pronunciation of the Ancient Greek name she had given me at birth, "Althea," *Healer*, just a gutturally delivered edict on her disappointment of who I was, bodily, standing before her at the front door.

Hello, biomère. הנהני

Back when I was reuniting, there just wasn't literature on the subject. And there was no truly developed Internet yet, let alone crowded chat rooms, forums, or any other place I could lurk much less interact or create some form of faux community. My friends were all normies. I had no family. I was in this alone.

To try to make sense of meeting, separately, each of my birth parents, I formed my own terms, comprised of French and Latin cognates: biomère, biopère, biodemi-frère, a full biosœur, and later, much later, I learned another first-born biodemi-frère, evidently a Dupont heiress's son born from my birth father's rape-fueled Boston Latin high school days.

Swallowing but not yet accepting her disappointment, I stepped forward to hug her, but she reeled from my approach, not allowing so much as a brush past her orbit. Smiling through a puppy-like mid-twenties visage, I told her how wonderful it was to finally meet her and thanked her for having the courage to do so. I told her right then, in the first few minutes of our meeting, that I felt nothing but empathy and respect for her, as well as innate love. I shared that I, too, was a mother, and could not imagine the pain of being separated from my son. In return, she looked me up and down again with disapproval, before audibly snorting and turning brusquely away. She muttered that she knew I had met my birth father, Daniel Arthur Dubro, a full year before her, and how wrong it was to not have come to her first. She told me that I was not

beautiful nor wanted, like her first born daughter. This was the last time she would ever look full on at me.

It was clear in this SoHo artist's studio doorway: Gloria, my biomère, just wasn't that into me. Her bitterness permeated the entryway as her husband invited me through.

וְשִׁבְעָה וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל וְנִחְמָה וְשִׁיזְבָּה

There's still nothing but love on my side. It's unrequited, yes, it's painful, but it's definitely love. And it's fear. There is darkness about which we should never know. There are corners that should remain unseen.

There are curtains not to go behind, and there are rabid women best left unapproached.

Years later, after her death, I remain fascinated by her intellect. By her ability to discern – and then deliver, loudly and with the greatest crudeness I've ever known – the most ruthless and often spot-on observations about any person in under two seconds flat. And I'm amazed by her inability to feel remorse. All my life, most keenly from childhood through somewhere in my very late 30's to early 40's, I held Truth, in some sort of abstract, Platonic form, to be the altar at which I worshipped. Truth, first, as well as Art. And Gloria danced on these stages effortlessly. Her lifestyle, her manner of walking, the baseless adoration of her husband's artworks, her love of literature, of so many things that did not touch her directly was . . . an artform unto itself.

As in heaven so as on earth. In my dream, as she visited me while passing – Gloria manifested all at once as imp, devil, demon, instigator, and the angry child she was in her most recent lifetime. I have never been so terrorized or had seen an actual demon until through that night she was passing. In life, she had an innocent evil – for instance, she once threatened to put a knife through my throat because she was feeling overheated, she once sent me black roses with a rather eloquently written death threat, she once complained to me that my cherished son's head was entirely too big for his body and should thus be severed due to what she felt were inexcusably inappropriate aesthetics, she once tried to kill my beautiful little dog . . . she delighted in surprise through threat, insult through observation, terror through action, and in whittling ornately carved oral daggers. I experienced her passing and my own first few minutes of life through the night she passed, and her husband called me late the next morning with the news. Of course, I had already known.

I think she lived – and I think she died – to shake things up. To frighten people. To put actual humans on edge. I think she is a six- or seven-year old girl who wants her daddy to punish her.

She looked to her husbands to be her father, the second of whom agreed, I'm presuming tacitly, for four decades. The first just left her pregnant, twice, with two girls to be placed into the system. They kept the first one for four years, but the second one, I, was a product of rape. He left her there, in Philadelphia, pregnant and institutionalized. *En route* to New York for a legal abortion, the car broke down, which is how I came to be eventually and wrongfully born. She was confined to a mental institution in Philadelphia, where he had left her, traveling with another woman, not her, to "find himself" in the Bay Area. This same man who institutionally raped my mother and caused her, thusly, to conceive me, most recent iteration, for about a decade before his covertly suicidal death, was posing as a Ph.D. psychotherapist in Philadelphia. Yet he had never completed his undergraduate studies. To be more precise, he never finished one year of college, most likely not even one semester, at the Philadelphia community college he attended (discovered only this year as told to me by his fourth or fifth wife, not at Boston University, as he had always boasted to me).

When not in mental hospitals, my birth mother lived a wonderfully unique to Manhattan New Yorker's life, teaching library skills to 8th graders in the Bronx. She had book smarts, having earned two master's degrees, and she had the inner-city street smarts to commute daily and with relatively little incident to and from the Bronx from Washington Heights. A tiny, pale, perpetually neon adorned Jewess, she existed violently and only occasionally happily among her Dominican neighbors. She and her Catholic German-born husband occupied a rent-controlled apartment and later supplemented their cramped living quarters with a home purchased in the middle of a crack dealer-infested Kingston block outside the City, pre-gentrification. They had lost the downtown artist's studio after 9/11. If nothing else, Gloria was the real deal.

Although the only daughter of German-born Jewish parents who fled the Holocaust and almost complete in-the-camps slaughter of their respective families for New York City, her, and Brazil, him, Gloria's second husband was a Catholic boy from Stuttgart, *land of der fuhrer*, who was to become a predominately unemployed New York City artist with an obsessive focus on abstract cubes. The paradoxes astounded me but seemed as easily congruent to her as hot salsa on fried tortilla or, perhaps, *Schwäbischer Kartoffelsalat*.

Gloria (Drucker) Amann was a barely five-foot tall *force majeure*.

So, too, I've heard, was her father, Siegfried Drucker. After fleeing Germany for Brazil, he was invited to leave South America altogether for the U.S.A., New York City, after he purportedly

had killed a man there with his bare hands. Gloria, born a few years later, would grow up speaking English rather than Portuguese. And I, born from institutional rape, would spring forth as a displaced European American from the City of Brotherly Love. Her mother, Ava Auerbach Drucker, saved the lives of several hundreds of Jewish children, smuggling them to various deemed-safe countries, and spoke many European languages. Ava, I would later learn, was German to the core: spotless, intelligent, hygienic, and efficient. While described as having been stoic, she was clearly also kind and nurturing and sacrificed to save others. But, evidently, not her own daughter. To be fair, she probably could not reach her daughter, even on Gloria's best days.

Gloria retained a love affair with all things Latinx. She preferred Spanish-speaking cultures, vacationed and/or frequently ran off in/to/from Mexico, and lived amongst the Dominicans in Washington Heights. I don't believe that she ever learned Portuguese or went to Brazil, but there was an always detectable South-of-the-border gusto to her. Yet while her threats and actions were hot-blooded, her heart remained daggers fashioned in slick black ice.

When it was time to memorialize and bury Gloria, her husband decided on a Catholic funeral home near their apartment on Bennett Avenue. In his grief and probable relief, he was able to laugh at having purchased a "two for one plot" in a Northern New Jersey cemetery. Strangers attended her viewing. He ignored the research he requested of me to locate the Jewish cemetery in which her parents could be found, which I did. Instead, he made the Catholic decision, evidently, during a walk one morning following his coffee and morning constitutional. He didn't wait for me to bury her, and I'm not sure her firstborn daughter knew about her passing until at least the following month.

Jews are always put to rest in closed and simple caskets – never to be seen again – and buried within one day, with certain exceptions to that second requirement.

Gloria was an offender but not necessarily in the legal sense. She was offensive, always, and was energized by people's mixed responses of disgust and fear. So, when she threatened to stab me in the neck, it just so happened that a NYC police officer witnessed that threat, made just before she darted down a flight of stairs into a subway station. That was her typical exit, the abrupt, mid-sentence departure. But this time, the policeman asked me whether he should grab her. He would be "happy to arrest loony tunes." I told him, "No, let her go. She's gone, for now. It's time. That was my mother." He patted me on the head and hailed a taxi for me and my then

17-year old son, who fortunately had been about a quarter city block ahead of us when she growled that particular threat to me and, unwittingly, to this police officer.

I usually referred to her as my birth mother, biological mother, first mother, or biomère. It wasn't lost on me that that had been, probably, the first time I'd not given the word mother an adjective. It was so foreign to me, just *mother*. But for this policeman, simple, easy-for-him-to-understand was best. And I didn't want to waste his time.

To call her an offender is, to me, something of an endearing term.

There were death threats, yes, there were black roses, but there were also the stray and not entirely unkind words. And some amazingly unique gifts. One year, in my mid-30's, she sent me children's mittens and a sparkly fairy princess wand for my birthday, three months after the fact (timed, interestingly, to her firstborn's birthday). Another time, I received the most beautiful piece of jewelry anyone has ever given to me, a two-inch wide bracelet of purple amethysts. And a gorgeous silk Asian-inspired bag from the Met's gift shop, in which I keep hairpins to this day. There were fewer gifts for my son, but no less varied and unique, like her. There was a real insect trapped in perpetuity inside a Lucite box. A few books and, once, a tee-shirt for someone at least eight years his junior.

There were clues to be found, if one looked, about the giver. They were trapped in the past or, in the case of the bug, just trapped. They promoted literacy, appropriate for an inner-city librarian. They portrayed the jagged angles of her personality. And while I couldn't physically hold my mother in life as I cannot nor would not wish to in her death – not her hand, her shoulder . . . her heart – I could look upon some artifacts of her. I may not have a mother, but I have some abstractions of her that I can refer to when feeling brave enough to even think of her or of my unrequited longing for her to see me, if only once.

When I was afforded a glimpse, there was fear in her perpetually childish eyes. It seemed as if she was always looking for her purportedly, possibly imagined, physically abusive, alcohol-fueled father. And she cast that view of the world on to everyday occurrences. Such as that one day, the last time she ever spoke to me, when she was hiding in the bathroom, behind the toilet, behind a locked door, from her husband, who was "about to beat (her) silly." Another time, earlier that month, she described how one of her taller male eighth-grade students was going to kill her. It was rare for her to call me twice in the same calendar year.

I should mention here that her husband was her lifelong caregiver. Every interaction I've had with him, limited as they've been, has shown him an even-keeled, logical, down-to-earth perfectly Germanic German man. I have always instinctively admired Helmut. But he was no angel. He didn't work until the very latter years of his marriage, in his late fifties or early sixties, and lived instead for decades on her million-dollar inheritance, as Gloria described to me several times. And the last time I spoke to her – more precisely, the last time she'd speak to me/accept my call – some eight years prior to her death, she was screaming into the phone that he was beating her. I knew he was in another room and that the violence was spawn from within her highly detailed head, and I remember viscerally feeling pain for him, separately, as for her. Following the death of his wife, I remained in contact with and overall high regard of her Helmut, despite how sternly he admonished me for crying over her lack of feelings for me. He nonetheless holds a position of concern in my heart for his years served to my birth mother.

On that now long ago phone call, I told her to go to a place of safety and that I'd help her figure out the mechanisms of securing a protective restraining order in her jurisdiction. But she just misdirected her fear and anger towards me, cursing me out long distance and saying she could not live without him. I proposed for her to come and stay with me, for whatever length of time she wanted, including the offer to fly to LaGuardia to fetch her and accompany her on the return cross-country flight, but she hung up on me. That was our on-Earth goodbye.

By the time she died in June 2015, the news of her passing brought a rush of all the rejection, all the times she didn't want me, just didn't want to know me, to speak to me, or to even look at my face, like a sucker punch to the stomach. It turns out I had not realized that I had been waiting for her, still: The four years we both lived on the island of Manhattan, which felt too small for her with me on it. The seven to eight years of silence before she died. Probably each day of my first 18 years of life. Possibly all of my days. Maybe even today.

יְהִי לְהוֹן וְלִכְוֹן שְׁלֵמָה רַבָּא

Lately I've been conflating this virtual sucker punch with the real ones endured as a small child by the adoptomère, who had enjoyed that method of winding me. She loved watching all of the air rush from my body. I think that particular nasty prank started when I was seven for having committed the sin of displaying a negative emotion, in that case, crying for the only time I can remember in front of anyone in that home.

When I think of a mother, I think of having to stand straight and to be at the ready to take it. I think of being pimped out to her husband and to her two real, biological sons for endless levels of sexual abuse, as well as to others in that community of synagogue-going Jewish men and not-yet-men. The non-childhood childhood. The unwanted daughterhood status. The many abusive JF&CS (Jewish Family & Child Services) foster homes before being tossed into that fully ensconced unwanted status. On hard days, I still wince at the indignity of her stretched out 270+ pound vagina smashed up and into my childhood nose as she made me watch her change, every weekend, in the dressing rooms of suburban shopping malls. The government disability checks she earned, more precisely, that I earned, by keeping me abused. Each, the biomère and the adoptomère, had issued rather detailed death threats to me; and each abhorred my face, my hair, and my breasts, but for her own set of reasons. Each told me I shouldn't have been born. Each made it clear that I would die young. Each instructed me, in great detail, on how to kill myself. Each wanted to kill me herself, only their intended (and often attempted, in the case of the adoptomère) methods differed.

But I'm still here. אני עדיין פה

I wish I had any words of advice on how to stay alive when no one cared that you were. My birth parents, too numerous foster families, adopted family and, ultimately and most painfully, my own son for one long-stretched point. I wish I could explain what feeds this will to survive, or any will to survive, for that matter. I wish I could say that I get through most days with any sense of presence. I wish I had ever been seen. But somewhere along the line, very early in life, I learned to see myself in what I call the "Soul Mirror," in which I can unflinchingly stare because I've remained true to who my Soul, before this lifetime, decided to be: *Althea, Healer*, with the Hebrew name of *Gershona*, the *Stranger*, and living amongst others, on both sides of the veil, hidden but with loving intention. And I try to help someone every day, even if in some very small and seemingly meaningless way. *There are many unseen Others dancing among us . . .*

Gloria didn't let me help her. She didn't let me love her. She wouldn't look directly at me and rarely let me look upon her for more than a demi-second. Helmut would later tell me that my very existence reminded her of the most treacherous man in her life, her mind-fucking rapist first husband, as she would describe my biopère. The few times she would mention him to me, she narrated him as *Danny the Sociopath*. He left two of his five or six (known) wives to years of electric shock therapy and debilitating depressions in their fruitless attempts to recover from him. The one son he raised, my biodemifère, Theo, took his own life just a few Decembers ago,

while on a meticulously planned long-term trip to Berlin, in a spectacular display of the often-darker side of bipolar disorder with major depression, equipped with a hunting knife, an Italian whore, and a couple of German policemen.

I didn't even know how to mourn Gloria properly.

My mourning customs tend towards a full entrée of Jewish rituals, with a side helping of Buddhism, a little Bahai and, perhaps, a gentle dash of Quaker silence. But she was buried in a Catholic tradition. So I recited the mourner's Kaddish each night for thirty nights, but only once in the space of an actual minyan. I chanted it once aboard a cross-country flight, in a window seat, and once in a filthy airport bathroom in the armpit of America, aka Newark, New Jersey. I didn't cover but avoided all mirrors for sixty days. I couldn't sleep for eighteen nights. I worried that hearing the ancient Aramaic and Hebrew words would anger her. I worried, too, what would happen if they weren't recited, lest that void upset her ancestors, some of whom I believed to have been rabbis. I worried about her not finding spiritual repose. I took a crash course in Catholic mourning traditions. I consulted a Franciscan priest, a Father Patrick, in Dublin. On a full moon night in Pittsburgh, I consulted a dear friend who had recently returned, in her mid-70's, to living and serving her G-d concept as a Catholic nun. I visited two Buddhist shrines and one Jain temple, just to cover her bases. I consulted a handful of Hindu gods and goddesses and some ancient Greek ones, too, just to get that much closer to being thorough.

I was spooked by how Gloria appeared in her visit in her overnight passing – having gone through more than fifty rounds of electric shock therapy in her life, at least twice with me growing inside of her, she appeared as a frightening apparition with electric green zigzags for irises rather than her proper singular deep brown color. I don't know if that was a clue for me to recognize her, a symbol of how she experienced this lifetime, *or something worse* . . .

For the first two months following her death, every electrical outlet I touched blew up. Appliances broke without apparent reason. Earth dwelling, oakwood board-straight-backed, Taurus-born Helmut told me that, as a German Catholic, even a *Schwaben*, he of course believed in ghosts. He said not to worry; that she would only torment me for one year. After that year, he said, at one year and a day, her power would be diminished, as was the case with all ghosts. He recited this information as factually as one would a train schedule or a random scientific data point, such as humans are held to their Earth by the laws of gravity. Like reciting Pi to 40 decimal places out . . . through Space.

But Gloria remains hidden somewhere in the streets of New York. She's in the dust of the shelving stacks, beneath the heavy tomes, somewhere burrowed within the New York public library system. She's found a way to meld her filthy fingernails into the Dewey decimal system.

In the deepest recesses of summer, you can still smell her in the rat-scrampered west-side subways. You can catch a sighting of her at a trendy downtown art opening, and you can dine across from her at a little-known delicious but not well-appointed Mexican food joint before she runs out on you just ahead of the check but only after having taken the time to spit all over your food, twice, just to be thorough.

She's there, she's in all of these places.

I am not . . . but I remain of her and from her. ברוך השם
(ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם שכתבנו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה. אמן!)

יִתְגַּדֵּל וַיִּתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעֶלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ,
וַיִּמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֶגְלָא וּבְזִמּוֹן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וּלְעֶלְמֵי עֲלַמְיָא.
יִתְבָּרַךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח וַיִּתְפָּאֵר וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא וַיִּתְהַדָּר
וַיִּתְעַלֶּה וַיִּתְהַלֵּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעֵלְא מִן כָּל
בְּרַכְתָּא וּשְׁיִרְתָּא תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְּאָמִירוֹ בְּעֶלְמָא,
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא, וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

~ 3 ~

An imperfect and incomplete Kaddish for my biopère, Daniel Arthur Dubro(vsky), spread over several essays

Coincidence is rarely a straightforward concept. And contrary to popular myth, it need not indicate significance between two otherwise seemingly unrelated entities.

If one braves a close look, one might acknowledge that it's more likely the case that energy moves in disjointed fragments, rather than in distinctive wave patterns.

The first time my biopère and I met in person, at age 24, me, going on 50, him, and almost each subsequent time since, we arrived separately and early, at some other location than the agreed upon spot, running into one another as if by chance.

He often said that these coincidental meetings were fueled by genetically coded synchronicity, and he once even tried to invoke Jung. From the beginning, I had my doubts.

On the particular occasion of meeting my biopère for what I thought had been the first time in my life (later to be proven untrue by wife three or four), we had planned to meet at the Philadelphia Academy of Music. We each arrived 45 minutes early and each sat in a section with tables and chairs set for tea, sandwiches, and the like. He recognized me before I consciously sensed his presence. In this first instance, while synchronicity was clearly at play, I noted that connections fueled by things other than chance are no more likely to produce actual Light than back-lit rapes are capable of rendering permanent if unsee-able scars.

I had brought along my then closest friend from Pittsburgh and my then always-questioning, deeply cherished four-year old son. I had negotiated some time with the friend to wander off to gather the courage and as much sense of self as I could muster.

Upon this first meeting, Dan wooed me with poetry, his, and recommended must-reads: Cynthia Ozick, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Primo Levi. And although he handed me his favorite translation of *The Brothers Karamazov*, it would take me at least twenty years to understand why he referred to me as Alyosha "in almost name but definitely in character," one of four, assuming one counted the illegitimate Pavel Fyodorovich Smerdyakov, when I thought he, Dan, had sired three children to two women. I was the only of his brood to have suffered from epilepsy so, no doubt, I more resembled Pavel than Alyosha.

But it was four children to three women, and I was blind to these facts until our last voice conversation, by phone, from across the country. On that call – which took place some 18 or so years after meeting – Dan shared that his firstborn son came from a family who wanted him. He said that “Richard, a Dupont heiress’s son,” whom he sired while in high school through what is now commonly referred to as date rape, was a successful man. And he bragged that he, Dan, had been paid handsomely to leave that too early made family.²

But going back to that evening of the day we met – following our precocious rendezvous at the Academy of Music, a stroll for two around Society Hill, and an absurd dinner for five at a small, back alley Russian tea house – Dan had us all to the townhome he shared with his (fourth?) wife, the biological, wanted son he kept (from his third wife?), and this wife’s son from an earlier father. Cutting a somehow feminine from below while altogether 6’1” masculine-like figure on high, seated on the bench in front of his baby grand piano, Dan sang along to the Joni Mitchell songbook while his fingers spluttered up and down the keys, adding more elaborate scales than the actual notes called for. He had the audacity to sing *My Old Man* to me, his second castoff daughter, from Joni’s hauntingly delectable *Blue* album.

At that time, so long ago now, I was still living in a fog of numbness cloaked by a deep layer of apparent yet forced happiness that well masked my PTSD. That said, I always retained a direct portal to Joy, which laid just beneath and just around all the layers of fatigue and trauma, and to which each of us has access at all times, no matter the circumstances.

The particulars of a not particularly interesting man

Daniel Arthur Dubro, my biopère, was an untreated (at times un- and other under-diagnosed) bipolar narcissist psychopath with suicidal tendencies (as diagnosed) but, due to said affliction of ego, usually did not follow through on such tendencies.

He was second generation U.S.-spun mongrel (three parts Eastern European shtetl and, as he described it, one part Irish, which ultimately turned out to be patently fabricated). My best access to research lends credence that his people begged, rifled, or bargained for their food throughout Eastern and Southeastern Europe, being pushed from shtetl to shtetl in Poland,

² In the Summer of 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 lockdowns, I heard from my biological father’s younger Toronto-based brother, who felt compelled to share the discovery of this firstborn, sold off son. I was too steeped in lockdown loneliness to take on what felt would be a project of meeting yet another half birth sibling, which would probably, as history had proven, end very badly. And who was I to tell this successful older birth half-brother that his biological father was a con artist when he, this man was, if one was to believe the news, a winner and an honorable man?

Ukraine, and thereabouts. His original surname, Dubrovsky, suggested Dubrovnik, Croatia. As stipulated, his murky backstory puts forth only that his mother was first generation U.S., as was his father (purported to have been a foundling left on a doorstep in Boston by a long auburn-haired fresh off the boat Irish woman). My "23andme" kit results suggest otherwise.

Although a full-on con artist, Dan was blessed with what many women considered to have been good hair, a fine ear for music and poetry, and a self-taught ability to code the first two generation of personal computers. He used this last skill for economic benefit for himself and, with a business partner in a suburban Philadelphia office that was commutable from Voorhees, New Jersey, created *Managing Editor Software*, which coded desktop publishing and design templates for print magazines. For the many years leading to that particular venture, Dan held various jobs in which he both did not grow his potential nor display even a scintilla of honor, ranging from slum-run apartment manager to U.S. military deserter, and others that I had to piece together over the years in conversations with various of his past wives.

The last of which, the one least in the know but who arguably held the most formal education and years of practice in her chosen profession, a licensed therapist, was not at all aware – as Dan bragged to me – let alone suspect that her husband was not a Ph.D., not a psychotherapist, nor that these fictions came to him while collecting \$10K a month from a private disability policy purchased while being a self-appointed bigwig of a software company that paid out this benefit based on fabricated memory loss (to which, years later, he would add fake Parkinson's). To enter into the benefit period of said policy, he had flown around the country from specialist to specialist until he obtained, in writing, the diagnosis about the memory loss that he sought. He emerged from this non-disability disability only when he identified the best and most recent sugar momma, this therapist, for his decidedly expensive tastes.

When I mustered the words to ask where my con artist biopère had attended college let alone earned a Master's and have gone through a Ph.D. program, he replied with a vicious growl that he, Dan, did not have to attend school nor pay money to be educated and that, unlike me, he was more brilliant than anyone who could have tried to teach him anything at all, in this case, about psychotherapy. He informed me that he had never met anyone who had read, cover to cover, as many medical journals as his own self and, as such, he had "more than earned at least one Ph.D. from five colleges."

He made it clear that I was never to tell his most recent wife and that he would see to it I would not have direct access to her. Both held true through his end, as well as beyond.

The last time I saw Dan in the flesh, it was just ahead of departing NYC for Seattle, in the summer of 2008. I surprised him, showing up to the front door of his Society Hill home in Philadelphia, where I was astonished to find a brass placard carved with his name followed by Ph.D., alongside the name of his most current wife, a therapist. Still playing disabled, despite the tall walkup design of his newest wife's fancy home, he shocked me, too, to have adopted a replacement daughter, who was the granddaughter of this most recent wife, an actual therapist. It appeared that Dan had told her a brazenly fictitious backstory about my presence in his life, including that I had somehow abandoned him. In one corner of his office, on the top floor, there was a photograph taken years before, during one of the handful of times we had met in person, on Pittsburgh's picture-worthy Mt. Washington. In it, I was wearing a soft 1990's grunge flannel shirt, hair whipping about in the wind, with my cherub-like bespectacled son huddled lovingly close and Dan smiling proudly. By the manner in which the most recent wife treated me, it was clear that the backstory must have been remarkable.

By then, nothing should have surprised me. No lies should have shocked me so deeply. But, pretending to have a Ph.D. and to be a practicing psychotherapist and to have been somehow abandoned by me . . . I remember feeling the shock all up and down my spine.

Fortunately, my entire real-life, real-time acquaintance with my biopère stretched only from 1994 to through the better part of 1997, when he tried to sabotage my decision to go back to school by creating drama that revealed the cracks in his otherwise impeccably crafted narcissistic cover story. The fiction in which he operated at that time was different from earlier and would be different from the later backstory. His cover stories changed per wife, per newly reunited child, and per economic station to which he aspired. We met again that one time in person in 2008, and that was that, other than the follow up phone call and a few stray messages he sent, much later, on Skype.

Facts no longer matter in the society in which I find myself, and the Ph.D. and profession included in Dan's official death certificate means that historians will someday notate this "data" as primary evidence of fact. I sometimes wonder if this death certificate, which serves to fabricate his self-erected backstory in perpetuity, is a primary cause for my lowered still, if possible, sense of self and placement on this earth.

A crack appears

Years earlier, the night before my first exam of my second go at formal education stands out as just one example of the real Dan showing behind the façade. In December 1997, he called to

tell me that he was going to kill himself and that no one better understood him than his "spirit child," as he was then referring to me, and that I had to come quickly from Pittsburgh to Vorhees so he wouldn't go through with it. And he had spent countless earlier conversations priming me on the precise method he would use to eventually end his life and how, with great specificity, he could make it look like said death would have been brought on by natural causes. He often shared, too, that he told only Theo and me about these details, as we were the two of his three children (again, really four) who actually understood him.

In law school, students get just one shot at making grades per course, particularly in the first and second of the three years. It means that, despite how hard you might have worked from, in the case of this school, the end of August through December, there was a sole three-hour slot to write your exam. I negotiated with my biopère that, if he allowed me to take my first two exams, I would drive the six to seven hours each way to see him in person. Earlier that season, he had expressed his disdain of my choice in schooling by sending me a shark bookmark and a small shark stuffed animal, coupled with the words "Don't do it. Quit." So, I promised him that I would not study for the remaining exams, rather, I would do whatever he wanted and just hope for the best in terms of getting back to Pittsburgh on time, keeping my son, [REDACTED] happy and not in the know as to the true purpose of our visit. He said that he would rely on his then wife, a nurse, until I arrived.

Upon our arrival, we found Dan laid out flat on the couch in his robe and pajamas. His then wife, Jean, shared that she had been serving him his meals and handling all of the domestic chores, as always, but that he hadn't bathed that week nor left the sofa. Dan remained in that resting-all-day state until, one evening, he suddenly popped up, showered, and dressed in what can only be described as a rather dapper ensemble, and took off in his car to be a poet at a local coffee shop where he was evidently invited to read. Although my biopère couldn't make it to his job for some time leading up to this period, he was suddenly perfectly well (that is, not acting suicidal) once the chance for attention and praise for his writing and, no doubt, admiring women who weren't his wife, were available to him.

A Zeus-like existence?

Lately, I've been likening my son's origins to the Zeus/Athena story. It's as if he had sprung straight from Dan's own head and that my womb was rendered irrelevant. They practice the same brand of narcissism. They are both grifters and conmen. My biological half-brother Theo, through Dan, was in a parallel but wholly different category. While he used his self-described



genius to avoid work and to feel an overall sense of superiority, he in no way lived as an active deceiver, like Dan and [REDACTED]. Up to the point of his rather violent and decidedly theatrical suicide in Berlin, Theo had been a gentle and truly kind soul. He possessed empathy. But the genetic propensity to such criminality was so strong in [REDACTED] that one couldn't help but remark on the similarities if one tried, and it was as if [REDACTED] had sprung straight from Dan, as Pallas Athena had sprung from her own father's head. Science might one day explain this sort of criminality through genetics strong enough to skip one generation but that sharpen in that later born male. Or maybe it was just the luck of the Internet's development and search engine manipulation concurrent with [REDACTED] ability to spin his always changing web of lies. Or maybe it was also the added support of a father with his own early expressed criminal tendencies, though far less evolved and checked by an apparent moral conscience, but who never questioned nor – when told directly by me about incidents our son put into motion – chose to believe what his son was capable of.

For the entirety of my life thus far, I've had a front seat watching con artists get away without consequence. What goes around does not come around. Not only do they go unpunished, but perpetrators are actually rewarded.

And thinking back to my biopère and my own son's early years from a rear view mirror

But going back to when I drove for hours in the midst of exams to save Dan from eminent suicide, as he had said, I was overly trusting and just not careful enough to have hidden the realities about the exams from my sabotage-intent biopère, and the stakes were not small for me. I was an undergraduate student loan-indebted single mother of a young high-needs boy, risking big to win big, taking on more high interest rate student loans and years not working full time. While I started working part-time for a hedge fund manager in my second semester of law school, I had been at that time vigorously sticking to a rather militant schedule: Rising at 4 a.m. to read case law, doing 20 minutes of stretching and weight training, splashing water on my face, starting breakfast, and then awakening my 7-year old son with a song, getting him ready and fed, and then walking him to elementary school while singing silly, made-up songs to engage him within our environment (cars, buses, birds, barking dogs, and the like). I scheduled all classes for when he was in school, and we walked there with heavy law books both on my back and in one arm (which, to this day, still has a more defined forearm from the weight of said books), the other holding his hand and chattering about the dreams he had the night before and singing throughout the six or seven blocks to the school. After goodbye, I'd board a city bus which, later that day, returned me to the opposite side of the street, from which I'd walk to

[REDACTED]

collect my son. While tracing our same route him home from school, we'd stop at least once a week for pink lemonade and a cookie and to play chess at a little coffee house in the Shadyside neighborhood of Pittsburgh, and another day a week we'd go to a variety store where he could select a small bauble or toy. Then it was home for homework, crafts, paints, puzzles, stories, etc., (I kept in that apartment an extra table just for these activities) dinner, bath, and boyhood bedtime rituals (two nighttime appropriate songs plus a story or chapter from a book).

In those early days, when we were alone as mother and son, I granted [REDACTED] one hour of television time per month. Visits to his father's home were rare, as he was grappling with fury around his father having married a woman who happened to be the mother of a same-class school mate. There was jealousy, disappointment, and anger, mingled with all of the debilitating emotions that flow from being not only disliked by his stepmother, but having a father who chose to have no backbone about it.

And my boy had always been hotheaded, with fits and furies that I managed successfully, for a time, just by keeping an incredibly calm and peaceful homelife. We left our shoes at the door, for example, to separate the outside from our inner sanctuary, where music, stories, and arts flowed effortlessly. He was bathed in gentility which, not until his teens, I had not realized was damaging to his ability to act and react in the Real World. Not that Pittsburgh was real in comparison to, say, a Philadelphia or Detroit or Chicago or a New York, but that over-directed stillness of his boyhood, created in my earliest single mothering years, might have prepared him for only getting his own way no matter the circumstances and cups of vanilla pudding topped with marshmallow fluff.

His was a childhood that, by design, dramatically differed from my own. Where I, at the age of around ten months, had already been wrestling with a profoundly infantile form of depression, more recently referred to as failure to thrive, and a distinct distrust of any and all of the parental human life forms with whom I was forced to live at various times, my son was encouraged to express his feelings in the safe space of our relationship.

Both his father and I, first together and then separately, created (with the exceptions of poverty and divorce and, in one case, the unchecked disdain of a step-parent) the childhood we would have liked for our boy to have had. Our intent was that our son always felt loved, supported, safe, and wanted. Those natural impulses are all that, I believe, his father and I share to this day.

But, looking back, having become a mother before I had yet processed the instincts it took to survive what was to become my final foster turned abusive adoptive home, let alone the ability to recognize the strengths of my own coping mechanisms. I mothered based more on idealism than on self-actualization. And from instinct rather than direction. I didn't really at all know who I was – other than a dreamer, an idealist, and a mother who showered her son with love. I was as over-achieving as a mother as I was with almost every aspect of life back in those days and no doubt through just a couple of years ago.

While I had to exercise these instincts daily, I also did not yet have the cognizance to think them through nor the ability to understand their impact on my budding adulthood and the ways in which these daily imposed traumas would not later enough affect my own mothering style and my inability, at that time, to be anybody's wife. For instance, looking back, I was probably an overly coddling parent, not even believing in the word "no." I kept the home environment safe and clean and peaceful, and my extremely volatile young boy all but dictated the ups and down of our daily life.

I had not yet understood how I had ended up pregnant and hungry just before turning 20, let alone be prepared to examine the years of having served as that adoptive family's sex doll, prostitute, door mat, money earner, medical experiment, and punching bag that had, cumulatively, laid me bare for the racing bicycle-saddled stranger who would impregnate me, ultimately leaving me squalid, hungry, and lost to decades of raising the, what I would later understand to be, direct spawn of this biopère I had not yet known of with any detail nor met.

In some respects, I was just a whisper from being a penniless teenaged mother failed suicide with an extremely challenging child. But in other aspects, I was one of G-d's beings wandering through an ill-defined and highly precarious physical existence while keeping one foot firmly rooted in the ways of the Cosmos. And my extreme love for and protection over this son never waned. Not even today, as I reckon with some of the acute misgivings and self-berating around whether I should have done almost everything differently while ruing the fact that one can't go back to do so.

Every erg of energy of love and of spirit, as well as every cent, was spent to pacify my boy, to only limited effect. Somehow, he would grow, like his biological maternal grandfather, to run a business founded on fake claims, lies, deceptions, but also to play the media more adeptly, perhaps, than even the most seditious and corrupt commander in chief of the country in which I now still live. While my son has often described his experience of being raised by me as so

[REDACTED]

"gentle," he also often insulted me for having been too easy a target for others to take advantage of. He models his disdain of my being on his own father's feelings, as established and modeled since our son was at least six or seven, on being, depending on the season, a dirty Jew, a gypsy, a loser, a bitch, or a woman whose own family did not even want her.

And I fully recognize and respect how my son found comfort in agreeing with his father while taking for granted the unalterable bond he and I shared as mother and child. I am even finally starting to mourn rather than just stay stuck in shock around this stark revelation: That rather than recognizing the artfully crafted cocoon of softness and gentility, my son would covertly weaponize these treasures against me, the girlfriend with whom he would later share his life, and a female neuroscientist he would sue to advance his own deceptions, as well as to use as fodder with which to manipulate the masses.

And I again choose to force another purposeful inhalation of oxygen and remember to whom facts should matter, and on what level of existence.

I remember who the true Judge and Arbiter really is . . . and, after holding that breath for a count of precisely nine seconds, I exhale for a longer count of eighteen, thinking of Soul travel to come.

And I cover my head and kneel in prayer.

~ 4 ~

Expulsion and shedding your own taint

If you were tossed into the foster care system straight after birth, there's usually at least one, if not dozens, of good reasons for that expulsion.

On its own, being booted from the biological family nucleus is neither good nor bad; it just is. But if such expulsion occurs in the United States, you tend to land on the streets, rather than within your broader genetic kin group.

Your identity becomes not just about having been set upon a different journey; it's about being placed on to an entirely different road than the one on which you started. We learn from this primal redirect that love (or necessity) will tear us apart not only from our families of origin, but from the ability to carve out any kind of status that doesn't reference having been a cast out.

Hence, it is our first job, often in the tender years, to make the choice on whether to assimilate.

We choose whether to bend with the wind or to be snapped like a twig.

As mentioned, I was deemed unadoptable for routine measures and it was determined that I would never walk or talk, as a result of such ongoing, continuous abuse, and that I was only fit to be adopted by a medical family. But that final placement with the petty criminal, Welfare check collecting Azeff family was as or more dangerous than all of the earlier foster homes combined, and I consider myself lucky to have escaped it alive.

And yet that background never mattered to how I saw myself on the levels that truly mattered.

Being abhorred from the start is not a circumstance that I've necessarily been able to shake, even after decades of being in the world with others. And, while I've been rejected by people of all stripes, I'm utterly okay with that. I respect their right to discriminate between the wanted and the damned. Those born into bounty versus into a struggle. Those born into an identity versus those from whom identity, even as a baby, was starved or raped away. But those are only impermanent scars. I knew that I had chosen to be a random Soul who would not be easily quantified, and one that very possibly defied definition, like so many others in similar circumstances. By only pretending to inhabit the boxes into which I was placed – daughter, sister, a human in bodily form at all – I learned early on that one's inner world mattered far more than the outer and that these inner worlds were far more deeply connected to the Infinite than to this plane of existence.

[REDACTED]

Over the years, I've come to understand that many cultures judge based on the circumstances of a person's birth. While it's not my measuring stick, I willingly stand straight to be appraised by it.

For example, someone I thought was a friend and for whom I provided endless hours over years of free babysitting proclaimed in the fifth year of our acquaintance that despite how kindhearted she found me to be, she, as a proper Ukrainian, as she phrased it, believed that I must have been a very evil person in a past life to have not been provided with a family this time around. Yet another apparent friend said that, in earlier eras, I would have been either hanged or burned at the stake for my ability to be so happy while clearly also being so cursed. A Hindu told me to regress into past lives, searching out and expunging murky ancestral karma. And yet another Hindu, a "SriSri," holy and respected one, told me I was the most luminous Soul he had ever encountered and that I was in my last instance embodied in human form. He and I spent an evening "reading" one another's Soul records on a full moon night in the middle of a lake fully surrounded by a ring of mountains in Rajasthan.

Many consider such an ugly background as mine – to have been created during an "I already left you for another woman while you are on suicide-watch in a mental hospital, but why not penetrate you once last time visit" by a decidedly off-duty and petty criminal husband, offering only rough form and fleeting goodbye sex to which my birth mother could not have consented, by definition of her institutional confinement, and leaving her thusly, alone and pregnant – to be my karmic problem to solve.

*The sun is gone
But I have a light.* (Kurt Cobain, Nirvana, *Dumb*)

I readily admit that my earthly origins are a stain upon my existence. In their most literal and ugly terms, my origins are semen on my head that, if not always seen, leaves me feeling sticky and not just a little dirty. I am the living epitome of taint. On hard days, and through even harder nights, the sins of this biopère still blur my vision. But I carried this man's shame for the better part of a hemi-century, and it's only now that I'm trying to sterilize, once and for all, the harmful residue of his tainted seed. I carried the weight of having been taken in and thrown back out by dozens of foster parents, too, and then ultimately by the ones who adopted me. And, upon reunification with my birth mother, her outright and ongoing rejection . . . at some point, I needed to see that the common denominator in all of that rejection was me.



But that version of me, as determined by an errant foster care system and bad luck placements, short and longer term, didn't really have effect on how I saw my place on the Universal stage.

Admittedly, there's no getting around the fact that I am the product of rape. I was both created in and born to a mother confined to a mental hospital. Neither of my muddled Earth-bound makers wanted me. Nor the numerous foster families, including the final one that led to a rather unfortunate adoption; yet it benefited them financially, as keeping me abused kept the monthly Social Security disability checks coming.

And yet, *it's all good*, because I never lost sight of what matters and to whom it should matter or, in short, whose opinions I should even choose to care about.

There are levels of experience that cannot be so much as be detected, let alone seen, by lower-dwelling energies.

Many of my bullies, for instance, have never been able to detect who or what I actually am.

To be clear: The circumstances into which you are born are irrelevant on the Galactic stage. A lifetime on this earth, among hundreds to thousands of other earthly lifetimes, is a mere speck upon the cosmic lens of Time.

*On a thousand islands in the sea,
I see a thousand people just like me. (New Order: Leave Me Alone)*

By sharing only small pieces of my particular origin story,³ I hope to help liberate at least one other sparkling Soul who finds him, her, or theirselves lost in the morass by which, daily, they fully believe will snuff out their last ember, their last Light.

We can learn the dance of change, and we can return to our one true purpose.

We, each of us, is and are part of the Divine.

And for those of us who have chosen, steadfastly, to have stayed in the Light, that is, to have manifested not unlike a leaf, a twig, or maybe a drop of dew on a leaf on a twig upon a tree . . . that is open to the quivering of each new morning's tentative steps, the moisture-driven kiss of

³ In my way of seeing things, not any one of us matters any more or any less than any other, nor is any of us unique. The stories we tell, the lives we lived, they are not so rare as we may be led by modern society to believe. I would argue, in fact, that the less we see the "I" and the more we see the shared yet shredded threads of humanity in each of us, the less inclined we are to suffering.

grass afoot, the Light that hovers neatly above our shadows, as well as below them . . . we can even walk if even in the shadows of conmen and still remain clean.

And we can supplicate our own desires for something higher.

We may bow to our true Maker no matter the season, no matter our burdens. We can be found among the blooming springtime irises, if only once a year, or among the sediment drifting slowly towards a somewhat gentler village down the way . . .

We can be our own salvation.

And if we are incredibly lucky, we can play a role in the salvation for others, even for those who didn't choose to keep us.

Some of us bear the weight of clearing out long and dark energy lineages.

Some of us are meant only to escape them, alive.

Others may choose to clear them while bearing new sparks, while some might be too scared to even try to shed their taint.

Maybe you are a Light worker, busily engaging in vibrational healing with those around you while ignoring your own buzzing pathways.

It's okay to experience the Now while recollecting what you perceive as the Then while choosing to imagine a future Then.

You can be going through more than you earnestly believe you can bear and yet maintain the blissful tracings of your Soul no matter the physical circumstances.

While happiness is fleeting, your Joy is actually untouchable by others.

You can choose to share your struggles, but the eternal flame of Joy, if present, is untouchable by any form of attack or abuse.

Challenges will happen onto and upon you, but your experience with suffering is optional.

Each of us can shift our timelines at will.

And some of you may hold memories of things inexactly, but your body holds the trauma memories in precise layers, like a terrarium. Your body, in fact, holds not only the vibrations of each attack, but the genetic coding and reverberations that stimulate you just as much today as

they did in the moment of each assault. You can shift your timeline and, as if magically, suddenly clear evidence will mount for that heretofore hidden experience.

For me, all time coexists. All lifetimes coexist, too, in this moment.

Yet, as negative emotions bubble up, as will happen in the course of human lives, I don't have to suffer with them. I, like you, can observe the negative feeling, or even the physical pain, but I can also switch to any view I prefer, at will.

We, each of us, can observe and engage our connection to the great wholeness of this Cosmos. I can choose timeless reverie and eternal bliss.

All Time exists in this moment.

And in this moment.

And the moment you are about to experience with your very next breath.

As you turn the page, your consciousness embodies the energies you've lived and will live, just as your every breath embodies the lives you've lived and the one or several you are in, as well as where you might choose to go.

~ 5 ~

Livin' on the Spirit side of the street

But since birth, I had, perhaps luckily, a direct line to what I refer to as the Spirit side of the street, where I felt safer, despite the often (in early childhood, for example) nightmarish memories of fire, death, noxious gases, and the particular assault of despair that dawned from each new morning's light. A not-by-choice diaspora soul, I was spawn from institutional rape within the confines of a mental hospital in Philadelphia, coming back from the latest bodily incarnation in Europe, in Germany. Even though my given birth name, *Althea*, suggested that I was really either Black or Greek (and I believed those were my only two possibilities), my dreams told me otherwise. I hold a special place in my heart for both cultures through today.

But I was just a random misplaced pale-faced European-derived Jewess set to wander armorless amongst licentious slobs and sundry strangers in these states not quite united but always bordered to one another in Christianity and by their respective good housekeeping seals of approval for properly nuclearized families, baptized babies, and non-biologically related brothers who shoved their slim yet circumcised dicks down their younger adopted sisters' throats.

Humans were so inexplicable to me that I spoke dog before I could speak English. Or maybe that first language was a choice. I listened to Spirits who conveyed meaning without moving their lips, and they came to me both at night and in utterly private spaces during the daytimes.

They still do.

Secret languages have always been more appealing than the fully matured ones, particularly that unique brand of Philadelphia English in which I had been so early immersed. *You guys* was a plural address to groups of humans of either gender (and, in those days, there were only two legally recognized sexes), you had to drink *wudder* to wash down your Tylenol, which your adopted mother so often enjoyed reminding you that you never knew for sure she had not laced with cyanide. Mayor Wilson Goode presided over a family known as Africa with a firebomb, taking out an entire city block and 11 Souls with it, and there were junkies in the hallways of the city and suburbs alike.

While fleeing, White people considered the suburbs safe, they were actually littered with racism, homophobia, and incest. Upon his request, I read aloud *The Farmer's Daughter*, a dirty paperback stashed under the children's bathroom sink, along with the girly magazines, to my

adopted father before I could even read *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* alone in my room to myself. Dogs were fucking cats while fathers were showing their adopted daughters' sticky issues of *Hustler* and *Playboy* while seducing them in Snoopy pajamas.

Or at least that's how I thought it all worked.

When, between the ages of 3 and 4, I was in a stuffy (both in terms of temperature and appearance) courtroom to be legally adopted, I showed my lacey underpants to the judge when asked – directly – if I wanted to be placed permanently in the Azeff's home. One would hope that the showing of my underpants said it all and that the professionals in the room would have interpreted the silent but on-point and overt display of what was happening in their home reason to decline – or at least to hesitate – in issuing the final legal seal of approval for said adoption. But such was not the case, and I ended up serving a no-time-off sentence in that home.

I always tried, in age appropriate ways, to be a truth teller, but my attempts were either unseen, unheard, or just didn't matter.

Years later, in fourth grade, I produced (with paper, crayons, markers, and pencil) a first edition of what I called *Playbeagle*, based directly on *Playboy*, with nude beagle centerfolds. As a lifelong and devout follower of Snoopy, it makes me sad looking back that creating naked foldouts of beagles, that followed human women's naked characteristics rather than what one would find on a she-dog, was one way in which I tried to make sense of the chaos that was my daily life. On one hand, I wanted to be a writer, in publishing, and sharing ideas. From another and deeper angle, I understood the language of porn in equal measure to that of canine communications. And outside of my at least three-times-a-day dosage of bibliotherapy with Charles Schultz with occasional cocktails of Franz Kafka, Ranier Maria Rilke, Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Hegel, Judy Blume (who, in my juvenile opinion, felt little understood the ways of blooming sexuality), and others I had discovered in the library stacks, my primary real-life instruction was in porn. While I was self-taught in the high arts of philosophy, literature, and poetry, I was formally instructed only in the arguably lesser arts of porn. I was insecure and unsure about whether I could relate in any language that normal humans would understand.

By the time I met Dan, a wavy haired not-so-candid dandy donning a questionably expensive fedora hat, manicured yet clearly mongrel fingers, and the ability to recite passages from my then favorite novel, Kafka's *Dos Schloss*, in German, I had overly imagined how a proper father might behave towards his actual *Bluttochter*.

In relation to Dan, it would take me years to learn how inappropriate it was for a daughter to be seduced by her father, biological or otherwise. All the more so to be traded and sold to others for sex, as I was in the Azeff's suburban Philadelphia home.

Having always been on the outside looking in of such relationships, albeit like an unschooled anthropologist, I fancied he shouldn't be telling me how lovely I looked with my hair pinned up or the elegance of my fingers that he had inappropriately placed atop the highest arches of his own lap, which he held for minutes too long while describing his first love or the palpably self-erotic obsessions contained within his mind.

Dan Dubro slathered seduction on thick with music, poetry, and fine dining. He perched his cello-shaped body on a bench, facing his piano, banging out jazz and Joni Mitchell, Bach, and Gershwin. When nestled in his well-worn leather recliner chair, he read medical journals to sound as educated as the therapists and psychiatrists he paid yet referred to as *friends*, one of whom he actually took as his last in a series of wives (the one who believed him to be a Ph.D. psychotherapist).

In the beginning, he would "Zelig" his purported undergraduate studies to whomever I introduced him. If a friend was in medical school, Dan had been a pre-med major at Boston University. If a salesman, he had studied marketing, again, at BU. As my undergraduate degree was in Philosophy, so too was his.

That he lacked any formal education would have been fine with me. I greatly admire the self-taught. The learned it on the streets. Those supporting themselves no matter the obstacles. A favorite real-life character I once knew, a heroin addict in recovery for the second time and with a long prison history, often described himself – once he had purchased a home and had money in the bank – with the phrase, "Pretty good for an eighth grade education, right?" What I don't admire is the earn off the weaker, the controllers, or the abusers. Both my son and my biological father engaged in those activities, actively and by choice, while grooming outsiders to think them each to be golden boys of the Internet world.

In our last call, Dan reminded me at least six more ways the ways in which I was unwanted by him, my birth mother, all foster families, and the foster family that had become the adopted family, as well that the other children he sired, Judy and Theo, were also wanted, like Richard (that is, the full biosoeur and biodemifères 1 and 2). I was the only one cast into "the clutches of

hate," as he referred to it, completely sidestepping that he had created me with his own willfully rapacious penis.

Perhaps most chilling, he told me, too, that my own son would one day hate me as deeply as he had hated his own mother. While I knew that Dan had shared with [REDACTED] both his hatred of women and his love of technology, at that point, I had no desire to see the clues that that last edict would, in fact, become a reality.

I should explain the vast disconnect between my biopère's early seductive days and the latter rejecting ones, with an expanse of at least a decade between the two. The cause of the schism, as I can only now decipher from glimpses in an internal backwards-facing mirror, was because I questioned his veracity a bit too overtly. If you want to infuriate a toxic narcissist, especially one who daily espouses his own uncompromising ethics, question his veracity.

I've unfortunately been through something altogether too similar with my now 31-year old son, who has not spoken to me since November 2019, when he lashed out at his live-in girlfriend for having a spontaneous miscarriage and leaving her alone bleeding, in the home they share, until later that night and barring her from going to the home and safety of her own parents.

He's also in the midst of a high six-figure dollar (not with his own money but fully funded for him) nuisance litigation scheme against a neuroscientist in which he (this *kleine/bisl pisser*/ביסל פיסער) holds himself out as the plaintiff, hiding behind a carefully erected fortress of lies, and he considers me too inconveniently ethical to talk to right now. We remain silent after three decades of quite the opposite, with the exception of the time I discovered he had swindled another young lady out of a considerable sum of cash and left still another in an emergency room with a bleeding head from rough shower sex. He avoided talking to me for four to five months following those revelations, both made in the same conversation.

But for all of the suffering, we are capable of creating what we can think-erect.

We manifest what we can dream.

And, if we empty our minds of the Here and Now, we have the power to recall an infinite number of encounters over countless lifetimes and different dwelling spaces.

We can remember, too, the vast expanse of infinite Space, and we can journey as far and wide as our emptiness will allow.

The more you cleanse yourself of the details of this lifetime, the more connected you can feel to the everlasting.

For years, before I was able to see through the enduring effects that the childhood roles placed upon me, I was unable to think of myself in the sense of having any value if not for the sexual pleasures and as the emotionally abusive outlet for others' darkest impulses. I did not know that I did not have to be the spiritual bathmat for their torrid feet, wiping their sins clean with my heart, cleansing their evil thoughts with my good grades or jobs or bills that I paid for them.

I possessed one unalterable freedom: to think into existence what I might want, even if that would take decades to achieve.

~ 6 ~

There is nothing you cannot handle. Really.

There are myriad reasons why any particular Soul would actually choose the hard way to go about things, that is, to make the ineffable choice to embody human form in yet another lifetime on this particular planet.

Likewise, there are myriad yet distinct reasons why I would feel the impulse to, at long last, come out of the closet.

Regardless of whether you were put back into the human form cycle or made the choice to enter yet another lifetime, there's at least one reason you came back around

At the very least, we're here to serve others.

We're here to heal.

And once we have mastered the art of self-healing, we are ready to help with the healing of others.

We only have to choose to do so, one deep breath at a time.

No matter what others have done to you or even on you, it doesn't have to be you. Their intentions, their actions, do not have to get baked into you.

What you've done to yourself also does not define you, nor what you've done to others.

What you call your past need not make you.

On at least one important level, we are each our own co-creator, not with our abductors but with our Maker.

You can display vulnerability without being weak.

You can lead without being a tyrant, and you can follow without being a victim.

Where your mind goes, your body will follow. It may take decades, but it will do so.

I promise.

We're here to bear witness to authentic truths, even in a sea of post-truth influencers, some of whom parade as journalists or are meant to serve as leaders or as heads of families.

You can conduct check ins with yourself and with Source throughout your life, at least once a decade. Who, when you were ten years old, did you want to be? I attribute almost all of my growth, outside of Spirits, dogs, and a select few teachers whom I idolize to this day, to Snoopy.

Charles Schulz was the narrator of my day-to-day goings on and through whom I was introduced to Christian America, from which I otherwise felt estranged. In fourth grade, for example, I vowed to myself that I would become both a writer and a lawyer, in that order. A writer with a law degree, a thinker, explaining otherwise overly complex topics – typically about taxation and fiscal policy – in readily accessible prose, never wanting to practice, at least not in a common law jurisdiction. For years I focused on tax policy and analysis, all while not veering from many forms of professional and personal writing. Snoopy was always typing up a novel he never finished, and I waited decades to come out of the dark with this collection of essays. Separately while concurrently, I always loved the ancient melodies of prayer and, for a time, dreamed of becoming a cantor. Even today, I sing prayers in Hebrew to console myself, including when driving through treacherous conditions in high mountain country.

But those Snoopy-inspired ideas were firmly planted. I had already started years earlier, writing poetry as soon as I thought my spelling was up to snuff. I slipped the first few stanzas, *Adopted Althea*, on to the carpeted bedroom floor of Joel and Trudi. It fell on not just deaf ears, but I was severely disciplined by the adoptomère for having written it. I was five. It was the first chronicle of my experience there, and it was not pretty (although it did contain a lovely, flowing rhyme scheme).

I tried to express the feelings of alienation and otherness in the easiest possible terms for them to understand, and it remains my first lesson on the safety of staying silent. Other than in diaries (that were burned in my 18th year because these foster turned adoptive parents were threatening to drive from suburban Philadelphia to Pittsburgh to lock me up, as the adoptomère described it, and throw away the key, meaning, take me to a mental hospital or to a police station that would lead to prison, she assured me, because someone had destroyed her firstborn's wedding album with a knife or scissors, eviscerating the new wife's image only, over and over again and, although I was 330+ miles away from the scene of the crime, she hoped to pin her aggressive acts on me, her typical scapegoat), I've always kept silent on these matters, except for scant and purposefully anemic mentions to a couple of early boyfriends, a few friends, and more often, to random strangers. Several times, although I told him literally nothing about my past, my first editor (Joel Roteman at *The Jewish Chronicle*) asked how I possessed

"such deep brothel humor," as he put it, while appearing on the surface to be a nice Jewish girl (upon meeting me, he was shocked that I was white appearing and Jewish, as he presumed, from my clips and first name, that I would be African American, like the great athlete Althea Gibson). To this day, it means something to me that he, a man then in his 50's, was able to sense in me, then in my early to mid-20's, something indelible. He once remarked, too, on a late paste-up Tuesday, that I seemed to possess the brothel humor of someone with at least 30 years of experience, when I was only 25. While I tried to hide in plain sight among the long galleys to proofread, the wax machine for manual paste-up, and the actual newsprint ink on my fingers, my editor was able to detect the more indelibly inked version on the inside of me.

Several years earlier, when I told the family's Rabbi for whom the adoptomère also worked as a secretary in her presence and in as loving a way as possible what actually happened to me in her home and with certain members of his congregation, he lashed out at me, telling me that I was just "an evil red-headed stepchild." Having not been familiar with that phrase, I respectfully corrected him that I had chestnut auburn hair and that I was an adoptee, not a step. He further admonished me and said that no one would care nor believe my allegations. That Trudi and Joel were good synagogue people who took me in as an often-returned stray told him everything he needed to know. That the second time I tried to commit suicide, a few weeks before my Bat Mitzva, he knew what I was really about, even after I tried to tell him then, so young, just a slice of what was happening. He told me, too, that it was my duty, according to the Torah, to provide financial support to them for all of my living days. And to keep quiet.

Because I thought my past was my fault and because I was still living under active death threats from the adopted family, I remained silent. And I ended up paying five digits worth of debt they had created in my name, through forgery, at what would now be considered usury level interest rates.

As well, to this day, I study the weekly Parsha alone at home or deep in the woods amongst my closest co-congregants, the mosses and the trees, too afraid of organized religion's wrath and the shame it leaves me alone with to process. Rabbis are not direct descendants of HaShem. Not even close.

If you've been fouled by a member of the clergy, no matter your affiliation, I urge you to take your faith in deeper still. You may be tested by so called spiritual leaders, but you need only listen to the song of your Soul. That voice will connect you directly to Source.

If someone tries to use religion to punish you, that person is probably getting it wrong.

Your job is to keep your own direct line to Source free from human obstruction, destruction, or adulteration.

Sometimes I worry that I remain a shell shocked from this background but, more often, I celebrate how it sometimes now feels more like chapters from a book I read a long time ago and only now can barely remember how it went. Memories, even painful ones, can fade into the distance. When something I think I will never survive starts to feel more like a barely remembered chapter from a childhood book of gruesome faerie tales, I know I have made that many steps along the journey towards recovery.

I note here that recovery is a process, not a destination.

It is a hoped for state of bliss but one that, in my experience, can only be fully achieved when separated from the body, which holds so very much of our memory.

One important gift we can give to one another and to each of our own parents is the realization that, in many cases, mothers or fathers became parents by chance more than by choice. They were neither old enough to know what's right or just young enough not to choose the path on which they found themselves, typically, nine months later. And yet there may be no greater risk than creating a life randomly.

*You can choose a ready guide from some celestial voice.
If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice.
(Rush: Freewill, Permanent Waves)*

The night my son was conceived, his father, who I had known for about a day, no exaggeration, said, while naked and erect on top of me, "I have a deep, dark desire to get you pregnant." At that time, I lacked the power to say aloud what I wanted, which was that I would not wish to add a pregnancy to my current predicament of being young, penniless, scared, hurting, lost, confused, and alone. But I vividly remember having no ability to say what I wanted and, more to the point, what I did not want. I was not unlike an open wound, rebounding from one intense experience to the next. While I did say no, clearly and loudly enough for my friend in the closet to hear, he kept going, and I did not fight him off physically nor say no more than once. I had no will to fight, only the impulse to sacrifice. D, the lasciviously gay man who was falling asleep in

the adjacent closet (yes, literally a gay man in the closet of my rented bedroom in a shared Pittsburgh apartment), also kept quiet, other than a chortle I may never be able to forget.

Freshly out of an abusive home, I got lost in crises: a smoking pipe filled with marijuana laced with angel dust, a poetry-infused sexual experience (that I couldn't even feel back then, literally), and on it went until what felt like that ultimate sacrificial moment, being impregnated by some unknown, unseeable dark force by a highly irresponsible 21 year old who, to his credit, was also in the midst of escaping his own painful childhood.

You can choose your own vibration.

Physical acts performed upon your body not keep you grounded in those acts. They don't have to weigh you down.

You can float away.

You can amplify your special healing powers. Even in the midst of acts of torture, you are free to be you.

A dick down your throat need not silence your speech. You can speak, always, if only to yourself or to your Spirit allies.

In that moment, you can form the words that will be shared if not Then, then at some later Then.

It's okay to choke on your brother's semen. You don't have to like it and, in fact, many would say you should not like one sickening drop of it. And you can erstwhile remain a crystal clean child of G-d.

Your only child, now an adult who founded a so-called business on a fictitious backstory may hate you, but you can still be a nurturing parent figure to many.

You can be unwanted as a baby but still have the kind of endless love it takes to accept every stray you meet along your path.

Or you may choose to never speak to another human being.

And each of the many varied choices and directions is valid.

You survived the unspeakable, and you earned the unequivocal right to choose what you want, how to spend your days, where, and with whom.

You survived what was, for so many others, absolutely and unequivocally not survivable. You also overcame your own will to kill yourself.

You believe yourself rather than the lies your abusers forced down your throat. You continued to listen to the Songs of your Soul.

Nothing and no one can stop you now, and you no longer consent to being silenced.

~ 7 ~

You can be overall okay without having fully healed.

No matter the time that might have passed, there are some tragic figures from whom we can never fully heal.

But you can be fully okay even short of full recovery.

I know what it is to fight the impulse, often on a daily basis, to take my own life.

And yet I keep walking forward. I have wept into the Arabian and Celtic Seas and walked along the muddied banks of lesser bodies of water.

If you are a believer, then the recognition of your true Maker renders suicide an inviable choice.

If you are a nonbeliever, then your decision rests perhaps on something other than duty or gratitude. It's your job to find your connection to the Cosmos. In either case, that's all of our jobs.

Resilience is resistance.

Your healing journey is yours, not your perpetrators' or your society's, wherever and whenever it might be that you are experiencing this go around.

You don't need to accept your society's rules for how you should see yourself.

You are no more imprisoned by your culture's beliefs if you are in Sofia, Bulgaria than in Guandong Province, People's Republic of China or in downtown Toronto, Canada.

The Eternal exists within each of us.

It's within your reach.

It's just there, in the tree outside of your window.

Observe, don't judge.

Feel, acknowledge, and let each emotion flow as it comes, without impediments or traps set by the thinking mind. Don't fight it, there's no need for that. It's valid, it's real. It's okay.

There are people who will cause you pain, things will hurt you, and you can still be okay.

There are those who will threaten you to not speak of what they did to you. They will threaten your very existence. They will terrorize you into silence, for decades at a time.

You will mimic the abuse and cause your own pain, too, often over and over for years on end.

But remember this point: The culture⁴ in which you find yourself is as impermanent as a twig that falls into a fast-moving river. The tree from where it broke changes, it regenerates and, while it endures on the surface, its composition never remains the same.

In this case, when remembering my birth father holds keys to understanding my own adult son, I am forced to keep in touch with the ghost of that altogether damning blood relation.

There will be days that you are fully convinced you don't have a friend on this Earth, even including your own self. There are times when you might feel compelled to hurt yourself. Take a breath and try not to inflict permanent harm, and then let it go. Send those impulses to ground or to the ethers.

You deserve better

There will be other times that you marvel at the seemingly endless coincidences that appear to connect you to far flung acquaintances. There are others where it's hard to say goodbye and still others where you want only to be left alone. Sometimes a certain glacial volcano feels like the only one who understands you, while Others you may need to commune with are now long dead . . . technically.

And it's all okay, wherever you are. It's all okay, however you are.

You are your own worst judge of your day's productivity or the flow of a sentence you just tapped into your laptop when, all the while, you actually need to be your own best friend.

Maybe you also need to repair yourself. And maybe you'll need to do the work of reparenting yourself.

Maybe you were left with something others can see, such as a permanently disfigured body part. That's okay. They can notice what they will, and you might still be left unseen.

⁴ And that culture includes the family, company, school, and government, in addition to overarching social, cultural, and media mores, which, like a river, also change with each passing moment

A friend in Minneapolis became a double amputee from a wrong choice of medication by an errant physician, but she still dances.

Another had her womb removed against her will, but she still creates.

Maybe you only trust yourself amongst strangers. Maybe you prefer to remain anonymous.

While you might wish others a long and fruitful sun-filled day, you prefer the otherwise unseen mysteries that only unfold through endlessly dark nights.

One need not negate the other. They both just are.

I have been a not-by-choice child sex worker and, as a middle aged woman, shared an office wall with Peter Comey, brother of the FBI's James Comey. Truth exists all throughout the space between these seemingly opposite and opposing poles. And, for me, time is not linear, it just grows stickier.

In the case of Dan, time grew so sticky that I still feel a compulsive need to wash my hands whenever I think of him. It's as if his criminally tinged semen drips onto the page when I work up the courage to remember him. But, over time, I realized that there are not enough showers or baths in the world to scrub his sins clean. He dumped his earthly misdeeds into my lap and over my head, matting my hair with his lies, spewing them like daggers through my heart. He tried to make me complicit in his crimes, as did the Azeff's and, later, my son's father and my son himself.

*But from my head to my toes,
From my knees to my eyes,
Every time I watch the sky,
For these last few days, leave me alone.
But for these last few days, leave me alone.
Leave me alone. (New Order: Leave Me Alone)*

None has ever so much as enticed me to consider joining their darkness. Truth matters. Ethics, too.

My personal mantra, *resilience is resistance*, means that I adhere to Truth, no matter the pressure to do otherwise. Our duty to others and the debts we owe to our Maker, society, Mother Earth, and to the Cosmos . . . these should never go unpaid. Unfortunately, I evidently signed up pre-lifetime to pay for all debts – public and private – on behalf of all who once or ever deigned to call me family.

And maybe that's as true for all of the males in my early life . . . which is why I cannot even seem to write about this biopère singularly. It's certainly true for the females, as well, but I am trying in this particular section to focus more on the XY varietals. These male behaviors, upon retrospect, were brewed in similar broths: shame, unmet lusts, inflated senses of self and power, white male privilege, and birthright-levels of misogynies.

And they each hoist upon me their most dangerous secrets along their seemingly unrelenting need for spiritual purification, albeit without a belief in G-d, on each of their parts, that is, other than the deity they worshipped between their skinny thighs.

These were, each of them, very weak men. Two of them are and were full-time grifters. These were dangerous criminals with a pathological need to appear, on the surface, to be law abiding. With one exception, the closer in age middle-placed older adopted brother, who I continue to feel deeply unexpressed sadness for probably also having been a victim (and later turned police officer), all early men in the guise of family were treacherous. Only unrelated, strange men were safer . . . not safe, but safer. And, in general, their transactions were cleaner.

Money at the point of sale was easier to understand than the seemingly never-ending transactions that occurred in the home.

By the time I was 38, I felt I could no longer stand straight under the weight of the secrets I was keeping for other people.⁵ I wrote to the wife of the older of the two older adoptive brothers. Having called me from a payphone at the back of a Target store in Florida some years earlier, warning me that she thought my adopted mother was coming to Pittsburgh from suburban Philadelphia to kill me, I thought she'd be open to hearing from me. In a loving and intentional letter (a copy of which I still retain), I shared with her why I had not been a part of that family since the age of 18. I told her, too, of the guilt I carried lest her husband perpetrate against any of her children, particularly the two girls of the three that they had created (one boy). And I told her how much I had truly admired her and how lovely a Soul I had always found her to be.

In response, I somehow ended up talking with her mother, a refined, intelligent, caring, and beautiful woman, and a daughter of the most elegant parents I've ever met to this day – both

⁵ "For we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own needs for language and definition, and while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us," Audre Lorde.

European Holocaust survivors – who shared that while she was sorry about what had happened to me, she was glad that they (she and her husband, as well as her daughter and her husband, this adopted brother) had the sense to move away from Philadelphia, away from “that crazy mother who raised you and who, we thought, always wanted you dead” to Florida, where they lived in well thought through comfort. She shared that her son-in-law was in no way at fault and that, *if* he had hurt me, it was while he was still a teenager and while he was living in that crazy house. I shared that he threatened my life while in his 20’s but she just again apologized for not being able to say or do anything for me. She assured me, too, that her grandchildren were all safe.

But such did not turn out to be the case.

~ 8 ~

The Confederacy is still kicking in the U.S., even in the most surprising of hands.

Some years following, her grandson, Robert's only son, ended up in the hospital with a bullet through his chest. Now living in Sarasota, Florida, he – the great grandson of beautifully strong Holocaust survivors – was busy taunting Black teens of his own age. After waving the primary representation of pro-slavery Confederacy from the back of his pickup truck and calling them every vile hate-filled slang term known for African Americans, one of those bullied boys put a bullet through who was meant to be my G-d son's chest (meant to be because I went missing for decades and not only did not fulfill my obligations to him but to anyone at all, by staying quiet and far off).⁸ My would-be nephew was born in suburban Philadelphia, a Northerner, and not a member of the Confederacy. He was a transplant to Florida, not even a bona fide Southerner.

Years later, another male from the same generation and distance from European Jewish Holocaust survivors, my own son, would support Proud Boys rhetoric and complain to me on many phone calls about how difficult it was for him and all other White males, considering all that had been taken from them. I reminded him that not so long ago, I would not have been considered White – as a lesser race Jewess – and, with whatever percentage blood that gave him (depending on my own Semitic lineage, which was murky on the biopère's side), he too would be considered something that was not quite White.

One has to pause to reflect: How are these decidedly minority boys – one 100% Jewish and the other somewhere between 25% and 50% of Jewish blood – so evidently wooed by hate? Why, in the case of one, did he feel it his right to taunt African American teens with hate speech while waving a Confederate flag and, in the case of the other, feel it his right to build a private arsenal for himself, while suffering from untreated and severe mental health issues, and express paranoia about and fury over how hard it was for White males in his generation?

What is happening with our Millennial boys in the U.S.? And for those who descended from legitimate minorities themselves, how did they in turn choose to oppress or keep silent in the face of oppression?

When and how did these two Jewish boys become the bullies?

⁸ For sample documentation of this event, see: <https://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20090425/teen-arrested-in-sarasota-shooting>

And how many generations back and what societal lessons must we be willing to study – even if it's uncomfortable to do so and, maybe, especially so – to unearth the roots of the remarkably suspicious and deep levels of entitlement these boys feel to wield their power in such irresponsible ways? In some instances, in such potentially deadly ways?

And how did we all fail so miserably? Had I failed my would-be nephew as deeply as my own son? Had my lifetime of silence helped to create these horrible realities? Because I kept his father's secrets – albeit under threats – had I helped to conceal what should have been shame and turned it into something worse for this would-be nephew?

I had – with great intention – placed my own child into a preschool in which he was the racial minority, as I had done in his grammar school. In that Spanish language magnet K-5, his classmates were Black, White, and Asian from India, S. Korea, China, Malaysia, and from other smaller Southeast Asian countries. And he went to a Japanese language middle school, before he and his father decided together that his father would launch surprise litigation against me to remove him from public schools altogether and place him into a paid-for Catholic 9 – 12 high school, citing that the diversity and roughness of the public schools were too uncomfortable for [REDACTED]. While it was a step down from the Hershey school that a psychiatrist had earlier and strongly recommended, it was not the public school environment that I had for so long believed helped in leveling the playing field in the U.S. to sustain at least an earnest attempt at building a pluralistic democracy.

My son, from a very young age, attended gay Pride marches with me each year, as well as worked at a homeless shelter downtown packing up issues of Jay Katz's *Street Beat*, made by and for the homeless to assist with teaching work-related skills and giving a voice to lesser heard from segments of society. On an everyday basis, he met drag queens and Christian conservatives alike, and as many in between as we could have the privilege of knowing. All types were within our purview of daily living. That was important to me to show him true diversity – of backgrounds, paths walked, race, nationality, gender, education, physical capabilities, economics, sexuality, access to resources, and intelligence.

Despite these intentions, to raise an open minded white male in the U.S., he would later strongly disdain other emerging genders, people in transition, and several additional groups of others.⁷

⁷ That's in addition to, for years, calling me a dirty Jew. Around this time, too, he taught me that I was a libtard and an SJW, which evidently stood for Social Justice Warrior, not Single Jewish Woman. After a rapid progression from being a Rand Paul supporter to a Bernie (even serving on a transportation committee for Sanders), to a rabid Trumpster, my son suddenly started attacking my liberalism, which before that time had not (typically) been an issue. In that same timeframe, his hatred to groups of additional others grew, concurrently and fiercely.

He would later sing the rallying cries of entitled White males while oppressing his own live-in girlfriend in very traditional ways. And despite that I instructed him from the beginning on consent (that no means no and what affirmative consent sounds like), as well as the dangers associated with unprotected sex (HIV and pregnancy, as just two), he would mute these lessons, as well.

Ultimately, I think by oversaturating him in idealistic lefty culture, I unwittingly helped create a foreseeable backlash to such. I get it now. It's not shocking nor unique. But the extremes to which it has gone have been altogether unsettling.

I ignored one of Newton's basic principles, as my son is now an active equal and opposite reaction to the search for truth, fairness, and meaning in which he was raised. I was as guilty if not more for the sins he was set to commit.

And with the overtly racist Jewish 18 year old waving a Confederate flag, literally, while uttering racial epithets, and who got a bullet through his chest because of it . . . the last I heard from him (during a short period of communication over Skype), he felt zero remorse. It had not been a wake-up call nor a rock bottom. If anything, it appeared to have reinforced his prejudices.

I wrote a letter to his equally young assailant in jail, expressing my concern for him. I shared that I was a sort-of relation and that my heart felt as deeply for him as it did for the taunting would-be nephew. Both boys, then in their last year of high school, had suffered great harm, but only the darker skinned of the two was imprisoned. Of course, only one boy grabbed a gun and discharged it. But they were both boys. Not men. This was and this is the United States of uneven and unfair consequences. This country was and is awash in weapons, including easy-to-find handguns. Only the gunchild (I cannot write gunman as Michael Jordan Mitchell was not yet a man) was incarcerated with male adults, left to suffer highly foreseeable torments that can be had in an adult prison. But for this young person growing up in an acutely racist, pro-gun, pro-bullying culture, would he have ever felt the impulse to pick up that gun?

The country in which I live, built on many thousands of years of First Nations labor, started to crumble, I suppose foreseeably, on the edifices erected by the White men who conquered those tribes, the land for which they served as stewards, and who imported, by force and with merciless cruelty, an entire race of darker-than-them people who would be punished for generations to come just for being found on what they purported to be their land. What's currently known as the United States of America is owned and now being fought for by conmen and often heavily armed and varied types of criminal personalities.

And while the conquering White race inches closer to becoming a by-the-numbers minority in the U.S., the traditional heteromale normative is revolting with the best it can muster – lies, misinformation, and populist rhetoric designed to move frightened citizens to a more perfect union.

The two-party system started to buckle many decades ago. Why have we not yet reimagined our politics within the space of a Parliamentary system, where lesser heard from yet equally important members of what – we were sold as – our pluralistic society could gain the chance for having a voice?

Sometimes, mere survival can be your true win. And your resilience is your resistance.

Do we ponder what happened to those who were lucky enough to have fled Germany just in the nick of time? Do we stop to consider the fates of not just the strong but the weaker ones, as well? How did they survive the guilt about those they left behind? We only hear about the strong among them, the ones labeled as survivors. The ones who, joining one toxically hyper-capitalist society or another, achieved what that culture considered to be great. But what of those who didn't fare so well? The ones who couldn't overcome their bad dreams, guilt, horror, or their PTSD. What of those who couldn't bear to put their children in schools? What of those who couldn't muster the strength to get out of bed? Those who didn't buy into the belief that money is meaning.

There is no numbing cream for some types of pain.

And there is societal shame in lost opportunities.

What if, for example, you made it to the United States, Brazil, Sweden, Israel, or to England and you wound up, rather than making it in a learned profession, unable to leave your home and collecting Welfare checks? Shouldn't that sin be kept hidden behind closed doors?

What if you were a German employer, a book shop owner, for example, who lost your favorite employee, a scholarly young Jewish boy who we'll call Blaustein. Would you not wonder if, upon his just-in-time escape to the New World, he had become a success? What would you think of his nephew, for example, who lived on public assistance, Section 8 housing, and other forms of handouts for decades, never working one solid job or supporting himself? And what if, when that later born self-entitled male inherited more than \$2 million from the uncle, he continued living on such subsidies, aided by his three sisters, one of whom practiced law and another of whom worked her entire career within HUD? What if, that is, he and his siblings were coconspirators in

several carefully planned and active forms of fraud while the uncle never missed a day's work or lessened his gratitude for having made it out of Germany alive?

There are expectations to the narrative of survivors' lives that losers fail at by definition and, as these expectations go, are not encouraged to report.

In short, survivors who do not thrive are pressured to stay silent, overtly or not, by family or by the societies in which they only sort of live.

Their story, maybe your story, doesn't feed the majority's narrative.

And maybe your survival doesn't reflect your society's values.

But your existence remains True no matter that doubters have something to gain by denying your identity.

Speak –
but keep yes and no unsplit.
And give your say this meaning:
give it the shade.

Sprich –
Doch scheide das Nein nicht vom Ja.
Gib deinem Spruch auch den Sinn:
gib ihm den Schatten. (Paul Celan: *Sprich Auch Du*)

But if you want to see it, it's not hard to recognize true strength.

What if you took the bold leap of defining your own sense of self? What if the society in which you happened to be placed into at birth is not what need define you?

Your current society might be best served by keeping you quiet.

You might have been sold for sex to an important man who leads an important company.
Clearly, you are meant to be silenced in an ongoing and unwavering manner.

Remember: When you are in the weeds, any struggle only deepens your ensnarement.

Such is the way of the natural world. But if you can choose, in that moment, to just be, to acknowledge it without resistance but with perseverance and promises to yourself, in private, that one day, this too shall pass ... and that in that moment, your only job is to survive it.

Observe, don't judge. Persevere, don't struggle. All the while, do not consent to victimhood.

Your radiance depends on holding fast to your inner sanctum where beauty and art are formed.

You are a miracle. Your resilience is your resistance.

You are still here.

~ 9 ~

Ex mala bonum

*"If a soul is left in the darkness, sins will be committed.
The guilty one is not he who commits the sin, but he who causes the darkness."
Victor Hugo and later quoted by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr*

Even if you were born from rape and later traded to and from foster homes surrounded all the while by evil, you can and you must choose to live by the goodness your Soul dictates.

You can be the *ex mala bonum*.

The inverse is also true. If you were raised in love, security, and good intentions, you might still choose to diminish the Light around you, choosing daily to sit within entitlement and without a moral compass, committing bad acts against the easy prey in your midst.

While proceeding through my last month of pregnancy absorbing the newfound information about my biological background, I decided to maintain focus solely on having a healthy trajectory to a safe birth. In those days and through his first four years, my son and I lived in one tiny Pittsburgh apartment or another with his father, with whom I had eloped just weeks after meeting. By day, when he worked as a bicycle messenger, I would sing real and made-up songs to our young son, kept him clean, dry, warm, fed, read to, and well-protected, and no doubt over-served not just to his every cry but to every mere grunt. So much so that, by going on the age of three, he had to be tested for hearing because his father had been born deaf in one ear, our son had many ear infections, and he was not yet properly talking. It was determined that there were no hearing issues, rather, I too quickly catered to his every need. As well, I would add that our son was a planner before a doer. In this case, when he did start to speak in any true sense, at 3 ¼ years old, he spoke in full conditional tense sentences. "Momma, that would be a duck."

While recovering in the hospital from a four-day birth and on a week's course of IV antibiotics, the Azeff's arrived from across the state to try to take my baby son.

To be fair, the adoptopère would never have thought of this or most of their schemes, as the adoptomère was always the one in charge. They, or she, used a credit card to finance this cross-State trip, a copy of one they took out in my name and charged, while I was starving and pregnant and then laboring, shoes, hotel rooms, and other nice-to-haves. While I had spent my pregnancy wearing \$7 flat soled cotton Chinese slippers purchased from a local dime store, the adoptomère purchased shoes and a fancy purse for herself at *Flossie's Bags & Bangles* in

Lafayette Hill, in addition to other retail splurging (see Appendix C). She was panic shopping because one of her primary sources of income, me, was about to stop producing for her.

These details matter very little. What matters is that (1) I had not yet understood her need to go on a shopping splurge while I was a penniless, literally hungry, in-labor 20 year old, and (2) the police to whom I later reported the crimes of forgery and fraud (after obtaining original receipts from the credit card company and, later, from a student loan company for which she forged my name on expensive five-digit "plus loans" and pocketed the refunds), no action was taken against her. It took me years to pay off the debts she created in my name.

But what also matters is that it was the continuation of some hard-learned lessons: That con artists always win, perpetrators not only get away with their bad acts but are rewarded, and that being silenced into submission will just serve to fuel your own bad acts against yourself, as well as teach others – be it in the workplace, with friends, or even your own child – that it's completely okay to bully you. But these were still early days.

And it's worth noting an important caveat that reflects reality in the U.S. The con artists who always win, almost invariably, are members of the privileged race. That is, the white or white-enough seeming con artists always win. If you appear brown, black, amber, sienna, red, or something not easy to characterize, the inverse is often the case. You can be walking down a street looking for your own lost dog but be seized, restrained, beaten, and locked up just for, as mentioned earlier, the sin of being found on the white man's land.

From the age of 18 through mid 40-something, I would come out of hiding every several years to invite the adoptomère and adoptopère on a healing path with me. As well to perform teshuvah. I offered, each time, to find a third party netural (therapist or mediator) to help establish healthy rules for having a relationship. Each time, I was either rebuked and/or threatened by the adoptomère with my life. Such was the case, even in my early 20's, when I thanked them for having taken me in and keeping me fed, as well for the needs-based scholarships that allowed me to go to some pretty wonderful socialist-type Jewish overnight summer camps in the Poconos. I wished them well and to live in happiness and good health. I have retained these communications to this day, and I will share them with you upon request. I also told them I had to protect my son from them, as well as work on my own healing, far enough from them to feel safe.

And I kept my [REDACTED] fully and well protected.

I was determined, from the start, that he would further propel in the direction of the *ex mala bonum*. At that point and despite the abundance of clues, I had yet to acknowledge the darkness that was looming just ahead.

~ 10 ~

My adopted older brothers were among my first lovers and, albeit a disturbing reality, remain my most poignant.

From birth, there was literally never a time that I was not sexually active.

Having been used up even before the age of one year and all the way through my first two decades, at least, I was never a virgin. I knew the acrid stench of semen before I could appreciate the clean scent of Ivory soap. I knew about old vaginas, too, in equal measure to the drowning sensation of deep throated skinny but angry penile encounters.

While I didn't know the names for the body parts or for the acts, I well understood the consequences of having to interact with each.

I developed intuition because I had to.

And I knew how to foreshadow those acts, sensing the approach, the dialogue, and the climactic change in scene.

One such scene reminds me of how natural it was for me to intertwine theatre with sexuality.

Somewhere between the ages of 8 to 9, I was being meticulously directed, as if starring in some low-budget movie, to stand naked in front of the adopted parents' 1960's-style master bedroom set's bureau mirrors, facing adoptofrère 1, Robert, for his viewing pleasure, and directly astride adoptofrère 2, Marc, with the sides of our bodies touching, being told to stroke one another's lower sexual organs, my arm crossing under his, while chanting rhythmically, "We're brother and sister, we're brother and sister."

Ever dutiful, I chanted to the tune I thought would best fit the task, *How Deep Is Your Love*, by the Australian disco trio, The Bee Gees. Knowing that they, the brothers Gibb, were actual biological siblings, I thought emulating them would best serve my own older adopted brother's stage directions. At the time, I prided myself on using such seemingly clean logic, missing the point entirely. Then, as now, when I'm not careful, I might fulfill someone else's wishes without even acknowledging my own pain to myself, let alone to a potential partner.

Robert sat on the edge of the bed watching us, directing us to move a little closer and to face one another while we were instructed to repeat the mantra while, me, moving his penis round and round and he moving his fingers round and round on top of and inside of me.

To this day, I can't fully shake the humiliation of having had the dogs watching us, as well as adoptofrère 1. As well as the Spirits who could see us, watching knowingly from inside of the mirrors. Even those three ill-behaved but lovable SPCA late-to-be-neutered male adoptees would not have pawed at their own littermate's private parts in such a measured manner. Even they were classier than we could have felt for each other, let alone for our own selves, in that moment.

Fade and pan close to the next scene: Robert told Marc to lay me out on the bed and to spread my then always bicycle strong yet mosquito bitten legs, where Robert proceeded to place his whole head to "snack on" what was between them, leaving me embarrassed for what Marc and the dogs were then watching more closely still. Marc was instructed to rub his pre-teen penis on my then still flat chest. Me not knowing how to rectify the strange mix of pre-pubescent physical sensations *down there* with wanting more than anything to follow every direction, as I did in school, with perfection, precision and, with any luck, over achievement of others' goals for me.

In this situation, however, I was ill-equipped to act out the role with veracity, for example, not understanding why I was supposed to make moaning noises, on command, that Robert seemingly hungered to hear. Over and over, I would disappoint my personal commander in chief, my oldest brother in that adopted family, Robert.

As a proper young female in the 1970's and, later, in the 1980's U.S. go-go consumer-led patriarchy, I immediately morphed my outrage into sadness that translated into hunger, something I could recognize.

He wanted me to come, but I did not know to where. I wanted Oreos. To this day, I can paint an erotic scene in seconds flat, without struggle. But the ability to feel it is an entirely different matter. I can create with words what I cannot always feel with the body. I can react but not want. I can tease but not fulfill. I may even be driven to fulfill my own pleasures but do so only indirectly.

We're not supposed to talk about incest in polite company, and certainly not in this consumerist society. Yet, without sexually abused children, the billions per year porn industry would be at a loss for its plentiful labor supply both in childhood and when they grow into often unhealed adults.

And not talking about it led me to decades of shame that never should have been mine to carry, at all, let alone . . . all alone.

Both as a child and over the years since, from time to time when I can stomach hearing it, I am reminded anew about how very guilty I was, annually, at Yom Kippur services. Chapter 57 of Isaiah, in relevant part reads:

And you, draw near hither, children of sorcery; children who commit adultery, and played the whore.

וְאַתֶּם קְרֹבִי-הֵנָּה בְּנֵי עֲוֹנָה יִזְרַע זֶרַע מִזְמָרָה וּמִזְנוּתָה:

On whom will you [rely to] enjoy yourselves; against whom do you open your mouth wide; against whom do you stick out your tongue? Are you not children of transgression, seed of falsehood?

דְּעַלְמִי תִתְעַנְגּוּ עֲלֵי-כִי תִרְטְבוּ כֹּה תִצְרִיכוּ לְשׁוֹן
סְלֵא-אַתֶּם יְלִדֵי-בִשְׁעוֹרָה שִׁקְרָה

I've asked at least three Rabbis at various times about this passage and the entirety of the reading, rather than in excerpt. None provided words of comfort, let alone of absolution. My taint was drawn in permanent marker. I was and remain indelibly inked. And while Robert and his wife are now active members of Chabad in Sarasota, I'm in a minyan of one here at the edge of the continuous 48, still trying in vain to cleanse my taint.

We're not supposed to write about incest, but here I am, dissecting a few of the more banal yet intimate pieces of my background. There were years that spontaneous blurbs or full-fledged poems seemed to spring from my pen nibs when I wasn't looking.⁸ If you find this chapter cringe-worthy, perhaps you could willfully choose to not look away. Shouldn't we have to, as a society, choose to see what's right in front of us? How can we ever hope to transform if we don't acknowledge our own shadow side?

On an often daily basis, I was sexually trained by a Scorpio and a Leo. I was taught to please but not be pleased. I was trained to be made dramatically uncomfortable with my own body's reaction to stimuli. I cut my sexual teeth in countless sessions of *ménage à trois* but haven't yet had the courage to ask for this arrangement as an adult. I can experience full pleasures only

⁸ For example, this little blurb, not a poem, written in 1987, at age 18, just a few months out of the adopted home and some 300 miles to the west, entitled *Incest*: "... dogs are still fucking cats. Cats on their backs screeching to be let go by their captors. Dogs — big ones — on top of a set of Persians. Humping the days away, while their owners are at work. No one knows what the house-pets do on weekdays. What Spot, Fluffy, and Morris are capable of. House-pets left alone 9 ½ hours each day while she types memos and he examines his patients. House-broken pets. Licentious slob. Alpo-breathed love in the afternoon. Cats on their backs. Cats doin' it doggie. Cats sucking up their own milk. Cats bending over to suck themselves. Cats in the master-bedroom. Cats doin' it on the kitchen table. The woman comes home to make dinner and sets the table. There's fur all over the table-top. She is furious with the kitty who must nap on the table while she is at work. Oh, it must be *shedding season*. Fluffy smiles inwardly to herself. Never trust a smiling cat ...". I have to this day the paper on which I wrote this awful little snapshot, complete with an equally poorly rendered drawing.

privately, often while asleep. I have never asked for what I wanted, let alone been clear, even with myself, with what that might be. I've been paid for family-had sexual favors with snacks, toys, being allowed to stay up past my bedtime and from strangers with money, unwanted gifts, and as tradeoffs between grown men. I've been owned and operated by parents, brothers, strangers, a couple of pimps, Jews, non-Jews, and even actual dogs, thanks to Robert.

I've been made filthy on the outside, literally, but found ways to be left untouched in my innermost feminine recesses. I've buried incalculable pain in chocolate, self-torture, overwork, and under a soft blanket of prescription sleeping pills. I've risen not unlike a phoenix when I shouldn't have been able to do so, and I can be crushed by mere words.

*'Cause everywhere I seem to be,
I am only passing through.
I dream these days about the sea.
I always wake up feeling blue,
Wishing I could dream of you. (Alexi Murdoch: Wait)*

I've been a sensualist without a man, and a non-sensualist given between and among too many men.

I can suck on dark chocolate with sea salt like I used to be forced to do to a dick.

I have been many men's dirty little secret.

I failed at not one but two marriages, and I failed at being a mother to my only child. I failed at being a daughter to not two but to countless parents, and I fail my adopted siblings even today. I failed at my own dreams the way I fail at life with every passing day, when I don't write, and every night, when I still need to medicate to sleep. With hyperreactive skin and an overly large nose, I even fail at properly air-tight COVID-19 face masking. I fail at friendship. I fail at jobs. I fail and I fail. I fail and I fail. I fail at describing the failure, I fail at falling. I fail while falling.

I fail at self-acceptance. I fail at taking one day at a time. I failed at 12-step groups for adult children of alcoholics and other disfunctions. I'm as much a failed suicide as I am a failed human. I fail at tears. I fail at hiking. I fail at being a whole foods vegetarian. I have an unquenchable taste for shaved parmesan cheese. I fail as a cook in the myriad other ways I fail at being a properly honed woman. I prefer a man to be the dominant in the kitchen, I prefer a man to be dominant in bed, but I tend to attract only the weak. I prefer a man to drive the car, but often I am imposed upon to do so.

I'm afraid of the men I should be attracted to. I abhor those who are attracted to me. I like meaty men with strong thighs but the skinny ass ones are the ones who want me. I like thick hair to grab hold of but the bald ones come chasing. I write stories I never finish. I weave poetry that stays hidden in the back of my closet. I have sex with ghosts. I grieve people who are still technically living. I start things I cannot finish. I vacuum bare floors and sweep at knotty rugs. I grew up too quickly and yet am still piecing together my childhood. I'll call you a cab but won't take the ride with you. I'll give you my cell phone number but won't text you back.

Dogs will do whatever they're taught while wolves move by their own instincts. I've remained a pup but crouch on the haunches of an over-developed she wolf.

I'm the mother of a lone sleeper cell and the litter mate of no one.

I'm a sloth while remaining utterly capable of jolting quickly and with more precision than a bolt of lightning from unyielding hypervigilance.

I will be your best friend while being my own worst enemy.

I am made happy only by supporting others. I healed and I healed until I became depleted to what felt like being at the brink of beyond repair. But then I remembered the regenerative energies it took from deep within to become more than the baby who would never walk or talk. To rise up like a phoenix stronger from each session of abuse. The more humiliated I was made to feel, the more beautiful I became. Mr. Kendrick Lamar – arguably our greatest living poet – tells us the darker the berry, the sweeter the fruit. I'm a so-called white woman who worships Kendrick Lamar, now passed over Juice Wrld, and Biggie. Just because it's shiny doesn't mean it's clean. This, too, shall not kill me, and I will not even kill myself. Growth is the only honorable path.

Most long-term neglect and abuse victims become abusers themselves. And addicts. Neither choice ever felt appropriate for me. The standards to which I held myself have always been high, at times impossibly so.

I was a Norma Rae before there was an Erin Brokovich. I was the dirt beneath Ghandi's feet before there were roads crisscrossing the ancient Indus Valley.

During my COVID-fever, I had a breakthrough dream about the second of the two brothers, the born Leo turned suburban cop. In it, I realized, to my 51-year old lament and surprise, how deeply and achingly I had missed him all of these years, all of these decades since those

suburban Philadelphia incest-laden days and nights that never seemed to pass, only stack upon the next, not unlike the deck of "dirty" playing cards⁹ I kept from that house, just as a token, a reminder of the strip poker I was forced to play at 7, 8, 9 years old, not knowing the rules today any less or more than I knew them then.

I always lost at cards.

I still do.

Marc has not spoken to me in decades.

Bitch, get off my dick. (Kendrick Lamar: G.O.M.D.)

Neither has the other adopted brother. But it was the one closer in age, not the mastermind and leader, whom I missed. I was as shocked to come to this realization in this dream as you may be to read it.

I am not at all saying that I crave a sexual relationship with either or both of my adopted brothers. I am saying, however, that they remain my most poignant lovers. Not lovers by choice, of course, but there it is. And the second one was not as bad to me when on his own. In fact, I fully believe he would have not conceived any such acts were it not for his older blood brother.

I deeply, hurtlingly miss him. Despite any wildly inappropriate experiences we had with one another, he, Marc, was literally the only person (that is, non-dog nor Spirit) in that household to provide me with any care. For example, he would see to the safe and sterile removal of a splintered finger when I was in the second grade. He would get me ice for swelling bug bites. He could provide acts of kindness amidst the darkest darks. He never sold me for sex, traded me for stolen goods or dirty magazines, or shamed me in front of others.

Not unlike a good Nazi SS officer, Marc had blue eyes and lighter hair, in those days, and was just following orders. Marc was born with an unshakable sense of duty, to which he's applied to being a police officer and son, in line with not speaking to me and acting as if I was an evil perpetrator.

I feel nothing but sadness and loss for and about Marc.

⁹ Purchased with my own hard-earned money, yes, even at that tender age, that Robert had stolen from my Snoopy jar. See Appendix E for a picture of said deck with a scratched case from decades of carrying them to wherever I moved, holding tight to reality despite how many times I was told, "It never happened."

*I said Brother, you know you know
It's a long road we've been walking on.*

*Brother you know it is, you know it is
Such a long road we've been walking on. (Alexi Murdoch: Orange Sky)*

Every adoptee harbors a secret desire to be chosen. Now adult former childhood adoptees that went through the system, like me, who were returned over and over again like emptied Coke bottles, worth just a nickel, crave unvague declarations of being wanted, just once, by one person.

Every child who was ever kicked out of his, her, or their home for being not good enough, too dumb, gay, trans, too weak, or, as once was my case, for going to prom with a Gentile, also harbors this desire. They want to be seen. They want to be chosen.

We wait and we wait, yet no one ever comes through with such clarity.

And until we name this need, we bring it, unfairly, into our relationships.

After enough years and seasons have passed, we might find the strength to choose ourselves.

We might feel brave enough to consider our own existential inconsequence.

We might finally revel in our non-value to others.

We might like not having to wait in line to use the bathroom.

We might enjoy cooking to our own taste buds.

We might write songs no one will ever hear, and we might recite our own bedtime stories in otherwise empty rooms.

Decades ago, when I still held a little hope, I asked adoptofrère 1, Robert, for an acknowledgment of what happened and, if he could muster it, an apology. I asked, too, if he could help me pay for therapy. I was in my early 20's and struggling to stay afloat financially for my young son, often skipping meals to keep him fed and just scraping together the monthly rent. Rather than providing the acknowledgment, the apology, or any assistance to get therapy, Robert replied, "I bought you a pair of skis when you were 18, didn't I?" That was the sum of his responsibilities to me. When Trudi admitted to just one-twenty-fourth of what had happened, she replied only that yes, she had recently decided to change out her bedroom, down to the linens,

because she didn't think like to think of my bodily fluids mingled with those of my brothers on her bed. That was sum of her responsibilities to me.

Evidently, Robert had told his children a polar opposite story of what had happened between us in our respective childhoods. I, allegedly, had harmed him sexually and mentally and I, evidently, was a threat that he had to guard himself and his family from. Years later, while living in Seattle, the second of his third children reached out to me via Skype. Which is how I eventually learned about the gun incident and the Confederate flag, as well as that I had been a childhood sexual perpetrator against my older of two adoptofrères, almost seven years my senior.

~ 11 ~

In defense of the O word

In general, I'm a supporter of orphanages over private placements. Horrors that have at least a chance of being witnessed by someone other than the perpetrators can be less damaging than those carried out in secret, particularly in terms of the long-term burden on survivors.

In the home, full-time, and from when I was around 11 or 12, when not working as a religious school secretary, Trudi, the adoptomère, would force Joel, the adoptopère, to repeat back every word she said to him, verbatim and without error, or she'd retort to the sort of escalated screaming, the kind of which amazes me to this day, should never have been possible for a self-described and often self-imposed asthmatic to sustain for hours on end without any audible breaths.

Often, I'd be trapped in the back seat of a moving car when this happened or, alternatively, in the house, with the windows closed. One of the three dogs took to hiding and shaking furiously at the bottom of a bedroom closet, while the other two seemed to have trained themselves to sleep through these storms, which occurred at least daily.

On one of her more abusively dominant days, I witnessed her shoving Joel through a window, arm first, and we had to then take him, bleeding, to get stitches. Arm only because she had shoved him into the back door, that was at the top third rendered solely of single-pane glass window. She immediately turned to me, around age 6 or 7, supplying the required alibi – that he had tripped over a tangled telephone cord and his arm went through the window. "Nothing happened, Althea, he tripped on the phone cord and had an accident."

She rendered him a meat cutter with only one arm for weeks following. Increased incidents of screaming him down daily, now closer to hourly. No one has seen that second of three dogs in weeks. Had to drag him out of the closet, literally, for walks. All three would nightly soil all over the living room and dining room, as well as stress-mark their territory on bed ruffles. My socks were constantly wet and yellow, the bottom of my shoes brown and mushy. My bed reeked of dog urine. It was hell living in that house. It was hell coming back to it after school, and I seldom visited it once escaping after high school. I remember the countdowns. Endless lists of days to go until I graduated, started around the third grade.

Years and months, days and all nights counting down. Some years were harder than others, and I hastened the wait through suicide attempts. Sixth grade and seventh grade, both years

punctuated with a swallowing of every pill I could find in her medicine cabinet. In the much younger years, I would deeply inhale nail polish, nail polish remover, and other childhood-available intoxicants (currently referred to as huffing??), not even aiming for or understanding the effects they could have on my ability to feel pain. I just felt drawn to the overwhelming feeling in my nose and lungs. The Robitussin cough syrup I'd gulp down when no one was looking. They medicated me with phenobarbital from the tender years, 3 or 4, through around 8 or so to stave off idiopathic seizures, an epilepsy of a form the doctors and their EEG tests couldn't trace the precise origins of but hours of bodily shaking me around, head bobbing, had they only known, could have well explained. The drugs meant that I didn't learn to fall asleep in a dangerous home and, once off them, I have suffered insomnia ever since. An eight-year old insomniac removed from bed late at night to perform sexual acts or for other shameful modalities of abuse, and I learned that being at the ready rather than surprised from sleep was the preferred way to be beaten, raped, screamed at, medically experimented on, or otherwise humiliated.

Cherry Hill, New Jersey, a not minor economic suburb of Philadelphia on the other side of the river, used to stand in my imagination as both a heaven and a hell. Heaven because it was where a certain Mr. Schwartz, we'll call him, who I didn't recognize until decades later was a low- to mid-level Philadelphia Jewish mafia boss,¹⁰ lived in a beautiful what I would have then described as mansion. More than its (and his) size, however, I was always awed by its impeccable level of cleanliness. It looked, felt, and smelled sparkling. In the Azeff's home, I never could escape the filth of it all. But in this Cherry Hill mansion, I could feel like a princess gliding across what I thought were marble hallways. But they were just clean, and white. And I was never quite either.

I remember what I would have thought then as an overstuffed envelope being passed from that homeowner to my adoptopère, after the owner was given time alone with this so-called father's youngest, his only daughter, me. There was nothing I did with that man that was any more or less difficult to maneuver than with any other, with the exception of having to navigate his stomach. To this day, I don't know if I can even imagine having sex with a penis that merely peeks below a very large stomach. I didn't have to do that, meaning, I only had to not stop

¹⁰ And, later still, pieced together that my adoptopère had worked for. Despite that he was Mafia-active for years, Joel was only caught once (for a minor offense compared to the usual schemes), and more as an individual operator rather than part of a crime ring. Typical of white-appearing men, he served zero time. See: <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/21940929/probation/> and Appendix B.

breathing under its weight. It's funny, thinking back, to what I perceived as the biggest issues of any particular day. Learning to hold one's breath while giving head so as to be able to control who put air into my body and how, and for how long. Was I the only young girl whose mind thought through physics of it all (force equals mass times acceleration) while giving head to older men for money directly paid to her captors? Was I the only young girl practicing yogic breathing techniques to get through it all?

To this day, as I had then, I hold a carefully curated list of songs, lasting about one hour, which I consider to be my goodbye from this lifetime soundtrack. I've always hoped that I will control the timing of my departure, something most of us will never be able to do. In my 50's, I hold out that small but important hope to control my own ending through breath, through song, and through just the right chords, lyrics, and tempos that will lead me to . . . beyond Here.

*And we're changing our ways,
Taking different roads.
Love, love will tear us apart again. (Joy Division: Love Will Tear Us Apart)*

Years ago, while I was in school for the second bout of advanced education, then Speaker Newt Gingrich had authored a *Contract With America* in which he extolled the virtues of orphanages as a method to punish young single mothers.

Still hiding in plain sight while trying to work out my past trauma intellectually, rather than feeling the feelings, I wrote in favor of orphanages for abused and neglected children. Not in favor of Newt, mind you, but expounding on that crumb of an idea.

To this day, I only hesitatingly and rarely consent to having my picture taken. For years, I was forced to "model" for the Azeff's in various panties, bathing suits, undershirts, training bras, and later bras for their pleasure and often for the camera. To this day, I don't know with whom those shots of what we'd now refer to societally as kiddie porn are stashed or if they still exist. There were a few early versions of home movies, too, not taken by them, as that sort of equipment could not have been afforded, but by various neighbor and synagogue males of random ages. I would be instructed to pose in so many ways and follow action cues on demand. From having to open my lips "down there" with my fingers for a hair-free girl child close up to opening up wide (either set of lips) for a circumcised penis tip just before it hit my face or *down there* target, below what I called my dust rag (now known as a clitoris) . . . I remain camera shy even today.

~ 12 ~

Exposing some of my own filth

I was not un-licentious myself in those days and in days since. For the first three to four decades, most of my identity was tied to men's desires, having been only able to see myself through some other's lustful intentions. When I'm not vigilant, the same can still hold true.

*Oh, my body's battered,
And, oh, my Soul is anything but pure . . . (The Gathering Field: To the Wishing Well)*

While serving as a stringer for various local newspapers and getting paid by the inch count, as one was paid in those days, I was cajoled from within my marriage into becoming a paid escort in my very early 20's, even after being out of the Azeff's home. We were struggling to keep our then small family of three fed. While my son's father, [REDACTED], fully supported sending me out a couple of nights a week after our son was asleep, he would soon thereafter weaponize that part of my background against me, turning not only the boy scout troop parents against me but most school families, as well. [REDACTED] always withheld his own part in any of it, as well that I didn't actually perform sexual favor for money. Notably, every dollar earned, including tips, for providing actual body massages to men while dressed in lingerie was reported in our tax returns. And even when my then husband was engaging in less than honest tax reporting and other not-so-legal behaviors.

Once, after our divorce and when meeting my biopère in Manhattan, I stayed a night in a hotel in a room directly adjacent to his, yet I still allowed someone to have sex with me – the lonely kind that lacked intimacy. Although I admired this very short-term lover for the talented writer he was, I hadn't at that time gotten to know who he really was behind the vitriol of his always running sociopolitical commentary. Adam, a sort of arm's length yet sort of close friend to this day, some 26 years post-separate experiences sex, remains an odd acquaintance for me while I serve as a confidant and writing fan to and for him. One night with Adam, together with punk rock Larry and musician/poet Richard,¹¹ I tried cocaine from the back of a taxi while we were crossing the Brooklyn Bridge, *en route* to where Larry kept his massive vinyl collection – so extensive it required a warehouse apartment in Williamsburg. It was my first and only experience with that illicit drug, the effects of which I experienced with horror, as on it I felt the

¹¹ A well-crafted news obituary on my still beloved friend Richard can be found here: <https://www.post-gazette.com/news/obituaries/2016/12/30/Obituary-Richard-Schnap-Artist-poet-and-musician-who-played-in-early-version-of-The-Cynics/stories/201612300165>

space that exists between the soft tissue of my own brain and the hard shelled skull that's meant to protect it. Despite Eric Clapton's testimony to the contrary, cocaine rendered me into an inappropriately thinking mollusk pondering the otherwise unperceived void between exoskeleton and my own personal thought factory.

She's not just blue, she's Smurf blue

It is typical for children who were molested, raped, and/or sold for sex to continue to hurt themselves into early adulthood and beyond. Promiscuity and addiction issues are prevalent among those who survive such backgrounds.

What saved me from becoming an all-out substance addict is difficult to say. Was it my preference for feeling pure? Or the need to feel in control of my body in any way possible?

To this day, I've never been drunk.

That said, I had a handful of horrible brushes with drugs from the ages of around 4 through 19, each in an attempt to shave down the stabbiest jaunts of pain. And exactly one time in my 20's, as described in the Brooklyn Bridge narrative.

Through today, or make that tonight, I rely on something to put me to sleep (melatonin with night aid by rite aid or the occasional Ambien, although my now-expired prescription of 22 pills a month often lasted years) but panic if the dosage, even of just melatonin, is too high. I prefer an organic, healthy lifestyle. I'm hyperaware of fabrics, fibers, and the ingredients of what I put on my skin or in my hair. It's a form of self care to take epsom salt baths. I would rather die quickly than have to sweat slowly through polyester. And yet I held myself in such low regard in those early years that I would starve, poison, or nonchalant my way through a seemingly accidental path towards death.

Purely scientifically, I should never have stayed alive long enough to have given birth to a son at age 20. As a twice failed intentional suicide (two direct and earnest attempts at the ages of 12 and 13, each by taking handfuls of prescription pills that the adoptomère stockpiled in her bathroom, getting better results the second time by taking a full bottle's worth of her Valium) and several parasuicidal behavioral patterns – including, among other things, an early but long-run bout with anorexia and mild bullimia, sniffing nail polish and nail polish remover from around the age of four (and while on Phenobarbital), occasionally sleeping on inner city park benches or in public stairwells, running off to New York City to live, without money, and sucking down what I thought was street-bought weed but, on two occasions, turned out to be something far worse. I

had a bad acid trip in which, dressed as Alice at an Alice in Wonderland theme party hosted by some wealthy and older Carnegie Mellon students, I left early, alone, to wander the streets at night, running from what I believed was really the Mad Hatter and a panic-inducing (drag) Queen of Cups who kept grabbing at my overly heavy breasts. I can't even think about that night without a bodily shudder flashback to the spookier than all other cats Cheshire Cat, who was sporting a tophat.

I had one terror-inducing walk with pure chemical-induced disassociation. In February of 1988, I thought I was smoking marijuana, purchased on the streets surrounding the [REDACTED] campus. When the person with whom I was sharing a bowl (named, if I recall correctly, Glen, but more commonly known by peers as Trixie Pixie Blonde Bimbo from Hell) was urinating and, hence, looking away, I greedily sucked down what was left in the pipe we had just packed. There was plenty left in the baggie for him, but I was eager to take the edge off the social anxiety I was feeling at a Summerlea Street third story apartment party of mostly older kids in the then and possibly still fashionable neighborhood of Shadyside.

Phencyclidine, commonly known as PCP, is not found in nature. I had unwittingly speed bowled an angel dust-laced pipe packed of what I would have then referred to as bad weed. Created primarily by the fusion of hydrochloric acid plus cyanide, I had unwittingly yet deeply poisoned my recently turned 19-year old body with tainted marijuana. I had at least one aftershock later that year, when summer turned to fall, and to this day I can recall the crippling fear associated with floating away from this planet, as I remember trying desperately to grip to the earth, which in reality was the kitchen of this stranger's home. While my other near death experiences have been incredibly beautiful, this one was horrific. The other party goers figured it out, that it was a PCP overdose, once someone yelled, "She's not just blue, she's Smurf blue," at which point, one of the hosts shared that particular blue hue meant I was tripped out on angel dust and that, when the same had happened to him, he tried to kill someone with a knife. I remember hearing, too, that she must be really sweet because, as she's leaving, she's just clutching the kitchen floor, looking as peaceful as a curly haired angel. But until Joe H., the frontman of a band with whom I was quite close, showed up, I was left alone, clutching to stay on earth. He carried me safely down a fire escape and got me to the hospital.

While the adoptomère used to frighten me into silence in countless ways, including with threats of forcing me to drink liquid acid through a straw that would put me into an acid trip from which

I'd never recover, it seems that we sometimes lack our own imaginations around how to punish ourselves when administering our own worst luck. Particularly when we're still young.

Solitude is bliss

It no longer matters to me that no one understands why I feel safest when at home alone or in a city, walking alone where not one Soul knows my name. Solitude is bliss. Anonymity is safe. One can inhabit lands of one's own making. My current casings include an actual meditation room and an office with doors to close out the rest of the house. Our society is suspicious of women who live alone, all the more so if they deem the space too large for her. Society was equally disdainful of me when I lived in tiny apartments, alone or while a single mother of one male child. I've never gotten nor sought approval from outside sources. While my next door neighbor lives alone in his house of equal proportions, not a judgment is uttered. Women should not claim space. Women are taught to take up as little space as possible, literally, to be small, and to leave the oxygen for taller, bigger beings. We are meant to hide in plain sight.

In *homage to my hips*, Lucille Clifton declared, among other proud stanzas:

"these hips are big hips
they need space to
move around in.
they don't fit into little
petty places. these hips
are free hips.
they don't like to be held back . . ."

I have been a not-by-choice child sex worker and an executive in Fortune 100 offices, as well as everything in between. I have slept on park benches, in stairwells, and in literally the poshest suite imaginable at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai. While there is little I've not seen nor lived through, the trajectory my own son's life would take . . . still leaves me, even in this exact moment, breathless.

~ 13 ~

Just another wandering Jewess

The Diaspora includes having escaped from Germany and so many places due East and South of there, as well as the yearning to return to Europe.

Deutschland was Germania in its early days.

I was *Althea* before I was *Gershona*, and I was something altogether unnamed before either.

I was German before I was a U.S.-spun mongrel, and I was pure Spirit before taking on this particular and filthy human form.

No doubt, I was just a wandering Eastern European shtetl Mystic before I was German. Or Polish. Or Russian. Or Croatian. Or Austrian. Or Persian. Or Hungarian. Or Syrian. Or Bulgarian.

But I was Gallactic before I was ever Earth-bound, as I will be after this visit, and I still prefer to soak in a sea of stars than in a tub.

The only time Gloria claimed any agency in the whole thing was when she told me that any of our current circumstances were the direct result of having been expelled from Germany. She did not say fled from, a self-directed act, but expelled from, somehow a victimization when, getting to avoid the camps at all should be seen as nothing but a miracle. But maybe she was alluding to the survivor's guilt that preceeds us all. Every one of us, born after that 1930's and 1940's period, in any place other than Europe, might grapple with the background noise of doubt, the fears of having lived when we were not meant to do so, to have crawled out from otherwise complete annihilation and despair.

Her parents, who met only after each had made it safely to the U.S., one via Brazil, were the rare lucky ones who escaped the camps in which the majority of their respective families met their gruesome, anonymous deaths.

For the handful of survivors and their families, scattered around the U.S., Israel, England, and other parts of Europe, there was a grand reunion in 2007 that I would have not known about had Gloria's therapist at that time not forced her to tell me about. Walking into the W. 57th New York City public venue, even I was surprised to have lost my breath – quite literally – when I looked at the family tree that not only held no leaf for me, negating my existence, let alone my son's, but

had just one leaf for the daughter my birth mother wanted, as well as for her three children. It indicated, however, that my birth mother and her current husband were the parents (that is, not the birth father) and that her first and wanted (and, evidently, only) daughter carried his, her husband's last name. She had everyone believing, too, she and her husband had raised my birth sister. In the normal way. No mention of foster care, adoption, or of an additional birth some four years subsequent. Surrounded by a room of strangers, I felt dizzy and nauseated, much in the way I often felt in the adopted home in which I was ultimately raised. There, too, I had to fight off fainting and force myself to eat or to drink on a regular basis.

But I persisted, mulling about the crowd of what I found to be the palest people I've ever met yet feeling like an imposter within this group of my own blood relations. They were all quite pleasant, but no one quite understood how I was connected to them. And, of course, I was not. While we shared blood, we had no legal relation (adoptions in the U.S. cut off legal kinship ties). Gloria denied my existence. There was a lovely and gentle woman from England who acknowledged that I was hers and offered to send a family tree that traced my maternal side "from the camps" through that day, and as included in Appendix C (in which I implore you to read a specific paragraph). And there was an incredibly interesting and vivacious woman around my age and who shared the exact same curl pattern who, having been raised in Berlin, was now in the U.S. completing her medical residency. Although she and I later connected a couple of times for walks and long New York City bike rides, she was unexpectedly and swiftly extinguished by a car when she had stepped out of the door of another vehicle in Philadelphia, in a flash ending to her years of hard work, fortitude, and dreams to becoming a doctor.

While Gloria pointed to the second great War to have set our fates, Dan held to a made up background of a Rockette boots-wearing mother who befriended gay men in Boston after being left with three children to raise by her husband, who was originally a foundling on a doorstep, dropped from an auburn haired pregnant straight off the boat Irish immigrant.

When you're a mixed background American Jewess, and decidedly unwanted from birth and by many parental figures, it can take decades to unearth your origins. And that's only if you have the strength to stomach what that search might yield. I knew I needed to write these things out of me. To externalize that which could never be shown. To return to my European roots.

If you were adopted, abandoned, or put into foster care, there's usually a good reason for that.

Likewise, if you were forced from your home – like happened to someone I refer to as a faerie G-d child – for being trans, or gay, or something else your parents did not plan for you (e.g. not a football player, not a beauty, not a scholar, or the like), you can equally understand this sentiment.

My advice: Don't go looking for where you came from unless you know you're made of strong enough stuff to stomach it.

You could re-cement feelings of rejection, and you can reissue your own primal wound.

You might be left to stand alone, with yourself, staring into a reflectionless looking glass.

You might start to question if you ever really existed.

You might feel unseen in a crowd of many or in a crowd of just two. Or even of one.

You might ponder with great seriousness whether you should have ever existed.

You might run from others' affections, not trusting their intentions. And if you live in the United States, you might end up homeless, without health insurance, or dead somewhere with a heroin needle in your arm. Or you might just befriend those types. It might dawn on you that only the street corner junkie poets make sense. Maybe only the forgotten empties are your people.

But maybe you also can only relate to other minorities, the truly strong. The ones who, despite all odds, chose to be sunny and bright. The ones who made themselves. The ones who know it's their duty to shine light even into the darkest corners.

The flowers from weeds.

The *ex mala bonum*.

When living on the U.S. West Coast, one way I judge a person is by whether that person could survive in a real East Coast city, at all, and, if so, for how long.

If a hipster Seattlite, for example, is standing in my face lecturing me on the five kinds of recycling or precisely how to order my coffee, I ask myself whether this very special snowflake would get his ass kicked trying to spew the same shit, say, in any of the five New York City boroughs. If yes, I flagrantly ignore said weakling. I have zero respect for that breed of self-important, always condescending politically correct sanctimonious pricks who don't know their assholes from their own nostril openings, left or right.

I hold silver spooners in equal contempt, including the one who inexplicably installed himself as commander in chief from 2016 to 2020. In these United States, you find yourself longing for earlier times. But in a Constitutional republic as young and fragile as this, and one literally built on the backs of slaves following multiple and purposeful genocides of first nations, you don't have much to look back on with pride. You watch a man slowly and mercilessly suffocated by a white man's knee on his neck, his whole uniformed body pressing down while his hands are casually tucked into his pockets, killing this beautiful Black man as slowly as can be done in that brutal manner while this Soul called out for his own mama . . . several times . . . but received zero mercy. Less than zero, if that's mathematically comprehensible. In this country, you learn daily that you just don't matter. If you're not an overnight YouTube or TikTok star or a grand manipulator of Reddit algorithms, a favored Trumpian child, or a random tiger in a Netflix series, you just don't matter. You need to a Ph.D. in being a liar here just to survive.

You shouldn't have the right to bird watch in Central Park.

In America, the United States portion of it, as the U.S. is not the only country comprising the Americas, but, as a shorthand favored by the Make America Great Again crowd, America peddles pharmaceuticals to the masses in paid-for television ads . . . it does nothing to conceal its favoritism of its dollars¹² over its public health, let alone very existence, of its own people. At least not of the masses. Unless you are the proper pedigree of white and moneyed, you had no place in Trump's (and other administrations') America. Well ahead of his election, it was known he'd blow up decades-long global alliances. It was known he'd take a fast food-density American shit on Europe while licking the Kingdom of Saudi's desert-parched testicles.

But you are entitled to live in a slightly different version of the reality in which you find yourself.

It's up to you to decide where you want to live, on what vibrational level, where, and how. You can create your own freedom. You can levitate yourself out of any prison. You can live alone, unapologetically, or you can live with many others on the path to recovery. Or with other seekers. Or with someone you might not even really like. You can live with a dog, and your favorite bedroom pillow might serve as your best friend. The choices are endless.

Degradation can be far worse than the original wound. Shame far outlives our physical suffering.

¹² Among her many lessons, scholar Vandana Shiva tells us, "Frankly, a society built around consumerism is hell."

Even some of the kindly intended know-it-all so-called new agers will tell me that we create literally everything that happens to us. They say that life is a hologram that you project from within, asking for the challenges that appear along your path. In my case, that would mean that I created people to abuse me as a baby – including but not limited to physical, sexual, and other – I was found with safety pin holes in my body, burn marks, hair pulled out, and that which can be done to a female baby. Evidently, I not only wanted this, but I asked for it. I created people to abuse me in each year of my growing up years. I asked for the date rape that left me hungry, alone, and pregnant.

That type of thinking is injurious to those who have lived through deep and sustained trauma.

But the roots below are often more intricate and far stronger than the tree you can see above. And the most intricate root systems can support substantial growth over time.

With enough practice, spiritual growth can translate into intentional steps. You can set your own scenes, including the backdrops against which you may choose to dwell. You can replace back alleys with spotless hallways, but such shifts are not magical. It takes real work. Often your Soul knows your lifetime purpose before the earth version of you can hear. The darker your roots, the more broadly they may have expanded, the deeper they most likely grew and, thus, the farther you will have to travel. You'll have to forsake the very soil in which they first germinated. You may have to change climates. You may have to forget your own name.

You can walk away from self-sabotage, even from decades' long patterns thwarting your own happiness.

Some of the strongest people you know spent their early years in their own private bootcamps.

Like diamonds, some of the best people you know, and more likely those you've never had the privilege of meeting, were created from unyielding pressure.

If you survived years of darkness, you no doubt can endure pretty much anything. You'll delight in things that tend to bore other people. Drama-free days. A schedule. A clean bed. A washing machine of one's own. A pantry filled with the essentials, including dried tea leaves. The smile between strangers. A small dog's wiggle as she runs through fresh grass cuttings. A stray leaf blowing down the street in a seemingly straight line. Your own back yard. The murmur of starlings at dusk. Or just the sound of water draining effortlessly from a shockingly clean bathtub.

Not being yanked out of your bed in the middle of the night for abuse.

Time moves on. You establish new routines. Nightmares recede, sometimes. You challenge yourself to sleep through the night, without pills. You might take a midnight hike just to look at the far away stars all by yourself or to claim your own sighting of a once every 6,800 year comet streaking across the hemisphere in which you find yourself, or where you have placed yourself.

Learning to create boundaries. Learning to enforce them. Learning the power of "no." Equally, learning the power of "yes." Coming out of hiding. Moving into your own skin, even if it's not perfect. Envisioning the Light that is in you, through you, and around you. Making it super charged to move forward and to heal yourself and others.

Like faith, transformation is a verb.

Ram Das told us that wherever you go, there you are.

I've moved so many times that only the federal government, when conducting in-depth background checks for my DoD Secret Security clearance and, perhaps, for my WA State enhanced driver's license, which allows me to and from Canada without a passport, can assemble all of the addresses. Oh, and probably our dark overlords, Amazon and Google, and their ilk.

For those of us who have struggled with economic poverty in this lifetime, we know that days of plenty are never to be squandered. Just as those of us who have survived actual torture are made happy by the smallest of things that others seemingly take for granted, we might celebrate the seemingly unending joys associated with being able to pay our monthly bills. Even in my 50's, for the few bills I don't pay online, I write checks with a calligraphy pen from my Snoopy checkbook. It's a delight to be able to pay both the electric and the water bills.

There were many years' worth of months, decades actually, in which choices had to be made between eating and keeping the lights on, and between doing work that degraded my sense of self and being able to keep a roof over my young son's head. The housed choice was always made. Not once was I late on a rent payment, utility bill, student loan payment, the little childcare I had, nothing. I never borrowed money from anyone but often had to take usury level loans from credit cards or write introductions to porn videos that were otherwise beneath me. There is literally nothing in my life that I have or achieved that I did not earn the hard way. And, sad as that might seem to many, I don't regret this path. In fact, it took the better part of a

decade to learn the feeling of acceptance and just being okay with having extra toilet paper in the cupboard, a freshly pressed cotton dress, or an extra pair of eyeglasses for my desk drawer.

You may think you have a thoroughly unique story, and that perceived uniqueness might not feel too good. You might feel like a stranger, even to yourself. Your personal narrative might cause you to feel alien and alone.

You could be a stranger in your own home.

You might be unrecognizable to your own countrymen.

But if you examine the threads closely, you'll find common themes.

You are never truly alone nor unique.

You are never Here nor There.

You fit within a group of survivors, not walled off by human-made geopolitical boundaries.

You are the fodder for the eternal Glow in our vast Universe, which shines among countless other star systems.

While I have been only a pelagic traveler upon a sea of stars, I am never actually lost.

And I can see you and recognize how you sparkle.

How you matter.

And that you are a glowing ember that embodies the Infinite.

I gently whisper into your right ear:

The Infinite has your back.

And your front.

~ 14 ~

Solastalgia

As I start to write this chapter enshrouded in the wildfire smoke of September 2020,¹³ I am crippled by a distinct sense of devastation and sadness. It is day five with a dull headache and heavy heart for all that has been lost in this very special land, the U.S. Pacific Northwest, Cascadia, where ivy drips from highway overpasses and animals live in synchopation with glacial volcanoes and the only temperate rainforest in North America.

But that's all threatened now. It's turning to smoke before our eyes, from behind our closed but smoggy doors. For those of us lucky enough to be housed, we're experiencing extreme claustrophobia. And we have an actual salience for what's going on around us.

Things will never be the same. As the smoke sinks into our bloodcells, attaches into our lungs¹⁴ with a grip that only recently lifted, somewhat, from COVID-19, we cry privately, alone, apart from the rest of the country, the rest of the world, the rest of our neighbors.

In the Seattle and Olympia regions of Cascadia, neighbors are not neighborly (*A thousand islands in the sea*). The typical arm's length stance has been made all the more rigid by facemasks, fear, and division. Virulent rumors swirl around antifa as they do around the upcoming Presidential campaign. A coward called QAnon has invaded the hearts and minds of otherwise formerly thinking people.

My country's social unraveling feels not unlike the fall of the Roman Empire or, more recently, of Sarajevo. My fellow citizens seem to have the emotional inability or just lack cognitive capacity to recognize what they are seeing. And they refuse to acknowledge that the U.S., *not unlike its own biomère, England*, has been a fallen empire for decades now, propped up by nonbiodegradable plastics, pharmaceuticals, and junk stocks that fuel the capitalist society that keep commercials flashing before their citizenry's eyes. If you don't think we can become the next Bosnia circa 1992, you are willing your own blindness.

¹³ Again, time is not linear. I mention seasons and years in this chapter to lay a foundation to connect my son's trajectory to that of the nation's.

¹⁴ See, for example: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/03/05/973848360/study-finds-wildfire-smoke-more-harmful-to-humans-than-pollution-from-cars?sc=18&f=1001>

Now it's February 2021. I live in a modern nation state that refuses to admit that we all just witnessed a failed coup d'état. This still young republic refuses to look back as recently as 1923 Germany or to 1905 Russia. When the real leaders, the largest multinational companies headquartered in the U.S., don't want us to see the truth, the electronic news outlets (owned by approximately a half dozen corporations that control roughly 90% of what Americans hear), their politicians' rhetoric, and the general public won't acknowledge what is in plain sight – which we should be, if in an actual democracy, *required* to recognize, rectify, and admonish.

No matter the focus, all 12-step programs say that you are only as sick as the secrets you keep.

I live in one of the psychologically sicker industrialized nations, as it not only suppresses truth tellers, it double doses it. If you come out of whatever closet you were bullied into, you will be retraumatized. If you believe your own eyes, rest assured that they will be tear gassed.

In the first week of February 2021, there are no requirements for truth. In fact, many have moved to normalize the behaviors, rhetoric, and killings that took place (it really did happen) on January 6, 2021, at the U.S. Capitol.

One danger, among many, of thinking you are unique is that you might have trouble accepting the sometimes necessary curbs to your freedom.

In the United States, militias formed and white men with long guns and semi automatic weapons showed up at events because their independent rights were suspended for the sake of the many. The simple ask to wear a mask to help protect their fellow citizens ignited these (mostly) men's ires to the point of violence or shows of violence. Just fourteen miles from where I type this collection of essays, Michael F. Reinhoehl was gunned down swiftly and extrajudiciously in a State-sanctioned take out. The far left and the far right are operating at the extremes, creating dangers for both sides and for everyone in between – and for those outside of the system at all.

I look back to my own mothering style, recognizing the distinct errors I made around this very issue. For instance, I rewarded my son for barely anything at all, providing an early dismissal from school not once but twice to see the rerelease of the original Star Wars movie the day each opened in theatres. I told my son that because he was completing his schoolwork on time and being generally well-behaved, he should be rewarded. In all reality, I should have acted as if those behaviors were to be expected, rather than recognized as exceptional. I taught him an unintended lesson, namely, that he was somehow special and singled out from among his classmates to be excused early from school to go to the movies.

While at the time I thought I was creating priceless memories for him, I look back now questioning those early dismissals and the lessons they ultimately carried with them. He is now a [REDACTED] who has created a fictitious backstory to prop up a sham business. For years leading up to this business, he practiced the arts of tax evasion, creating Internet scams and sensations, and otherwise avoiding the consequences inherent in truth telling.

When I was in the seventh grade, the adoptomère had called the middle school frantic, insisting she pick me up early rather than allow me on the bus from school that day. She told them that my life was being threatened by an unknown caller but who she knew wore mirrored sun glasses, had dark brown hair and leathery skin, and that drove a van with blocked out windows in the back. She said that he was threatening to rape me, too, and described what I wore that morning to school, having watched me walk to the bus stop. This was not unlike many other stories she told, usually only to me, through my years in her home and often while being raped. To this day, I'm unclear what the message was supposed to be.

Notably, there was never any follow up from the school. It looked the other way much in the manner our citizens, today, look away from what's right in front of them. The country in which I presently live is awash in military grade weapons, many of which are owned by underemployed, underinsured, and generally unhappy and unstable individuals. Some of these individuals are privileged white males who, although they've had easy paths, feel cheated by some unseen enemy.

My son is one of those heavily armed, non-military trained, mentally and emotionally unstable white males. He has oft described to me how hard it is for white males in his generation. How nothing is easy. And this from a boy, now a so-called man, who – as a grifter – enjoys unearned fame, money, and other forms of riches extracted through bullying and nuisance litigation he doesn't even have to fund for himself. One might even question the legality of said funding.

My country exists in despotism. We have the option, as well, to create true change or to engage in some sort of peaceful ideas-led revolution.

And as Donald J. might have just begrudgingly exited, he leaves behind just under 20% of the federal judiciary and three of his own nine (33.333%) Supreme Court justices as his legacy. An already Christian country is becoming fascistly so. The fallacy of the church/State divide in the United States is as strong as the actual reality that Black Souls are continuously hunted and punished for being found in this land, often with their lives. While a nod to indigenous rights

might be made, from time to time, First Nations people go uncompensated for the rape, pillage, and taking of their land, their animals, and their own selves. The hunting and killing of transexuals goes barely reported in mainstream media.

"The perfect dictatorship would have the appearance of a democracy but would basically be a prison without walls in which the prisoners would not even dream of escaping. It would essentially be a system of slavery where, through consumption and entertainment, the slaves would love their servitude." Aldous Huxley

Unlike in the EU, which grants rights to be forgotten and fights for its citizenry's privacy, U.S. citizens volunteer these rights while willingly laying down \$1,000 plus tax of their own (often) hard-earned dollars to be surveilled. Some even take these devices to the bathroom, serving as a security blanket even in the most intimate of spaces. If any of such space remains, how do we grant let alone guarantee any base level of privacy?

We were just on the brink of formally announced totalitarianism, yet no one is admitting it.

I live in a country of liars and criminals who (at least, the white ones) are continuously rewarded for being such.

My personal life was mere prelude to the political, country-wide sicknesses.

And I don't even want to be here.

Not every second and third generation Diaspora castout from our real motherlands, Eastern, Southern, and Central Europe, and maybe even from various countries in the Muslem-led Middle East and near Asia, wants or has ever wanted to get stuck here in the New World.

Some of us would much prefer to be welcomed back.

~ 15 ~

Kaddish for my own motherhood

The first time I told my son, [REDACTED], even 1% of my own background (only that I was a sexual abuse survivor, nothing further), in addition to what I share about his reaction in the footnote on Page 124 of this book, he immediately spun it to benefit [REDACTED] fake backstory, saying specifically how this information would help make him look like he truly cares about women. That the boy I birthed and raised by hand would instantaneously negate while capitalizing on my trauma was dizzying. I told him that my story was mine to own and to start to try to recover from, even though I saw the cogs already turning in his criminal brain.

Now that I've written up a few vignettes of my background, I can only pray that, whenever he might read these words, he won't act to capitalize on them.

In mid-summer 2020, amidst COVID-19 lockdown, I heard from my son's girlfriend with whom he held a mortgage and lived outside of Pittsburgh. She called me crying, as she'd done approximately nine months earlier, while she was miscarrying, this time not as heavily and not in any physical pain.

Within two to three weeks of this phone call, a first in a series, I realized I had to act. It hit me not unlike a lead pipe to the throat that my silence was helping him use any female he targeted for money, fame, media attention, and daily support. Now targeting a Ph.D. female neuroscientist for which he was not paying the legal bills while living high on the hog of his girlfriend's labor was . . . just too much. He was also engaged in long-term manipulation of the media, threatening them with lawsuits, forced NDAs, and other acts to accept without even so much as a hint of fact checking anything he concocted, and his stories grew more elaborate over time. While I knew the consequences would be considerable (see Appendix E), I recognized that I could no longer maintain my silence.

*Another mother's breaking
Heart is taking over.
When the violence causes silence,
We must be mistaken . . . (The Cranberries: Zombie)*

Common wisdom dictates that there is no greater pain than the death of a child.

I would add to this truism that the slow, progressive disappearance of hope we hold for our own children is extremely painful and, as society all but requires, shrouded in secrecy.

There are doubts, questions, profound sadnesses, and what has felt like individualized mini deaths that led to that day when one realizes, all at once, each is real:

My child lacks empathy.

My child is not a good person.

My child might be sociopathic.

My adult child is not a good partner to his girlfriend.

My adult male child knowingly and calculatingly takes advantage of women.

My child is a con artist.

My child imposes his paranoia on others.

My child was created under much less than auspicious circumstances to a decidedly pro-choice mother who, finding herself not-by-choice impregnated by the man she had just met, could not make that kind of lethal choice for herself at that time or, for that matter, at any time since.

As a too young-made mother, I felt the Life inside and just couldn't even consider that choice.

As a man from Beirut would later describe me, I was, at Soul level, *doucement*. And yet I now am forced to reckon with the net result that I have made the world worse off for having birthed this child into it.

This child's mother knows the meaning of regret.

Despite all of the love in which my son was raised, I confided to a friend when [REDACTED] was between 14 and 15 that it was a good thing we weren't in 1940's Germany, as I felt he would have revealed my Jewishness to the first stranger he met on the street for a loaf of bread for himself. When it reared its head, his hatred was palpable. I once had to remove him from a High Holiday service in that general timeframe because he was uttering nasty comments about Jews – in a synagogue. On Yom Kippur.

In the summer of 2020, I learned that my son's girlfriend was leaving him and that she had been paying the entirety of the mortgage the two had shared, by that point, for some two and a half years. Taken with other information she shared over their longer period together, the background he had with an earlier girlfriend, and his incessant, obsessive fury over a female neuroscientist in his purported "field," I realized that my ongoing silence was, in fact, contributing to the pain and distress, financial and otherwise, of others.

I had been suffering under the yoke of disbelief, shame, shock, and other difficult-to-manage emotions for years by that point, trying to work through how the ways in which he was raised had resulted in such a self-described “coddled” and entitled man who wields his power and targets whomever he likes, without fact nor fairness on his side.

In the winter of 2021, I learned that my son had bullied – to the point of suing – [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for publishing what my son called defamatory content but that was actually true. He won – based on litigation paid through crowdfunding rather than his own money, as always – “substantial” cash damages, all the while still leading his live-in girlfriend to believe he didn’t have the money to pay towards their mortgage, monthly living expenses, or other cash advances from her 401(K) that he demanded of her without explanation.

And was all of the litigation being paid for only by random crowd funding? I highly doubt it. For instance, although a self-professed atheist yet while also saying time and again that he wanted to raise good Christian children, [REDACTED] several times mentioned his soft spot for “Mormon millions”¹⁵ and how easy it was to get their support. For instance, he would travel to Michigan to create talks, as he described, paid for by “those wealthy Mormons who hate porn as much” as he purported to hate it. Like porn itself, the Mormons – and any religious group who was willing to support his sham business – were just a means to further realize his goals of personal enrichment, fame, and other unearned treasures.

While I, like the girlfriend, did not know what [REDACTED] was doing, I labor under the belief, right or not, that my silence about the lies he was wholesale selling to the news media contributed to a hard-working, kind young woman supporting my oftentimes sleep-in-all-day, self-defined genius, self-described entrepreneurial software developer son. While she paid the mortgage (one for which she had called me about in tears just ahead of co-signing), holding not just a full-time job that reflected her studies for the degree she earned in four years but also two other professional endeavors, as well as handling a household larger and more project-inducing than she would have chosen for herself, as well as tending full-time to the care and feeding of this narcissistic man-child, she was verbally demeaned, bullied, and separated from her family.

Toxic narcissists hide behind the banner of the very opposite of what they are doing. My adoptomère, for instance, worked for a synagogue – appearing to be pious – while abusing me at

¹⁵ It’s utterly painful to call out religious groups. I am lucky enough to have had Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Mormon, Muslim, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Confucian, Catholic, Shinto, Druid, Zoroastrian, and other types of friends from all walks of life. I intend zero disrespect to the Mormons in this vignette.

home. My son had an affair with a young woman who was the public face of a DC-based nonprofit for fighting sex and gender abuse against women while he ran a company founded on a fake back story and bullied the media, all the while purporting to care about women in porn. He kept the actual woman who was actually supporting him separated at home from the real world, wielding the weapons of gender-based insult, judgment, and impossible standards against her, while he was free to behave in the very ways he accused her of. My son accused [REDACTED] of being a shill for the porn industry while he was enjoying the riches of the Mormon church, all the while professing to be an atheist.

Clearly, like me, his girlfriend had not known about these goings on in real-time. She, like me, and no doubt like [REDACTED]'s father, turned our heads from the ugliness, bullying, and outright crimes he was carrying out online and as perpetrated IRL. Although I told his girlfriend that I felt compelled to come out that past summer – with the information I pieced together from my own long history with him and as supplemented by what she had shared – to opposing counsel, I think ultimately that girlfriend ended up becoming upset with me for having done so, as she stopped speaking to me until somewhere between December and January of 2020 to 2021.

Maybe we all wanted to not see. Maybe we all wanted to believe the improbability of his constant and fury-feuled rantings over what our own logic dictated. For a few days, he even had me questioning this female neuroscientist's Ph.D., as well as whether she was a paid pawn for the porn industry. Of course, both assertions proved baseless, but [REDACTED] prolonged, enraged, and daily vitriol was difficult to combat. And, of course, he had already been actively yet successfully bullying the media for years into reporting exactly what he wanted, how he wanted it, and without so much as fact checking the simplest of assertions.¹⁶

My own stubbornness, fighting the strong recommendations to medicate him as a child and, later, to enroll him in the residential therapeutic treatment school in Hershey, PA for very disturbed

¹⁶ Please see Appendix E for an exact copy of the document I provided to the female neuroscientist's counsel, as well as the emails I sent to CNN, twice, and to *The New York Times*, once (in Appendix F). See, too, the email sent after the fact – once I learned about it – to the reporters from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who, due to my son's litigation, was forced to go under. He had not only successfully silenced the media, in this case, he had elicited "substantial" money damages and, shockingly, gotten a highly public, online apology from the organization. One that it never should have issued and money it never should have paid. While I am busy trying to atone for my son's long-standing pattern of manipulation, bullying, and committing various crimes, I understand that he, ultimately, will need to step forward. As written in my statement to counsel, however, I understand that I will most likely pay through Internet bullying, nuisance litigation, and/or bullets through my body. [REDACTED] carries out his retaliation and/or prophylactic bullying on his own but also has at his disposal what he had referred to as his "minions," referring to [REDACTED], the media, racist groups that [REDACTED], religious groups, and [REDACTED].

children, meant that I had served as an unwitting enabler. I fought it all off, allowing my unchecked and self-righteous liberal idealism and maternal protection for my son win over what actual professionals saw as what were the realistic, clinical circumstances.

In the autumn of 2019, a month or so before his girlfriend was pregnant, [REDACTED] father and I were on the phone. I called him crying, as I had been flabbergasted by his most recent set of newly concocted lies, this time on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and on the [REDACTED] [REDACTED], following some equally crazy assertions in an episode of [REDACTED] [REDACTED]¹⁷ I shared on that call that I strongly suspect [REDACTED] was about to impregnate his girlfriend. His father and I felt empathy for her – not yet even knowing that she was paying for their mortgage alone, let alone about the [REDACTED] site he had attacked, for all she had to do to keep our son, the tyrant, happy. He admitted that he wished our son could somehow be sterilized, without his knowledge, as his father always described feeling worn down and exhausted by his son's rantings and hence felt he could not have a discussion on the matter with him. He wanted to find a way to slip him something tainted – like in a military-style MRE, he had mused – that would sterilize our boy chemically. We both knew that there could be no worse fate for his girlfriend than having to handle not just him but a baby, too. And [REDACTED] was set on creating four babies, ultimately.

States of mind

In the summer before he turned nine, [REDACTED] allegedly threatened his step-brother's life with a knife, as his father had reported to me when returning him to me in a heap of crying at my apartment door. Evidently, too, his father had locked [REDACTED] in their home's basement as punishment before returning him to my door claiming, in front of him, this is why he doesn't like having our son in their home.

Like most mothers with children returning from visits to their father's homes, they come back to us exhausted, dirty, and hungry. All were true this time but also my son was deeply hurting and sad. My poor little one was unable to express at that time what was disturbing him. Not having been present in that home, I'll never know the specific series of events that led him to my door thusly. As is often the case, mothering took every ounce of not just love but strength, and I prayed for the ability to meet this challenge properly and in a way that would both heal my son while teaching him that violence or the threat thereof was never an answer to pain.

¹⁷ Let alone all of the highly irresponsible "journalism" as carried out by, among others: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

After collecting him and carrying him through the door, I just let young [REDACTED] cry while I held him. I removed his glasses, setting them aside, and soothed him bodily. Once composed, I fetched a meal for him, sitting with him while he ate, drank, and talked about things unrelated to the incident. About a half hour later, while he was still seated at the table, I brought all of the knives (as a vegetarian, I had scant few) to the table, laying them out in the open before him. I asked [REDACTED] what he was wanting to do with them, and what he wanted to do earlier that day at his father's. He described wanting "to cut" his stepbrother, to cause him pain. I asked what he meant by that. At 8 going on 9 years old, he described that his stepbrother had been bothering him, and that he wanted that annoyance to stop. I asked what happened when someone puts a knife into someone else. I asked for details. And I kept pushing, verbally, trying to pry from my young son what was really causing his pain. At last, he shouted that his father didn't love him. He complained that he loved his stepbrother, lived with him, and liked him better. While I thanked for giving voice to his feelings and reassuring him of how much he was loved, by both of his parents, [REDACTED] cried. And cried. And cried. I held him through all of that cathartic sobbing, eventually leading him to his bedroom where I held him until he fell asleep crying.

Upon waking, I told him to pack his dinosaur backpack with his favorite things because we were going to get ready for a trip, for which we left within two days. I prepared us by getting a AAA Triptik, which is what we used to use before navigating through GPS and the Internet, and a mass of art supplies. Having just received a small stipend for having worked the summer as an intern at Legal Aid for Children (now Kids Voice) in Pittsburgh following my first year, I had just enough money to cover a rental car (to keep us safer than my used car would allow), gasoline, and a few night of motels to travel from Pittsburgh to Colorado, where we would go camping in the Rockies with my old friend, Jay Katz, who I considered to be my son's g-dparent. We had two to three weeks to spend traveling, singing, laughing, and feeling feelings, on the open road, together and safe.

Equipped with cassette tapes, snacks, water, and lots of fun stories, my young one and I set off for sights unseen, to explore freedom and space to feel his feelings. With each state we crossed, I stopped the car, pulling over and getting in the back seat or, as weather and safety allowed, outside instructing my young one to pick a feeling, to choose his state. I told him that just as we could change our state, literally, by driving, he could change his state any time he wanted, that is, his state of mind. I encouraged him to feel anything he wanted. I asked how he was feeling. Was he excited? Bored? Happy? Tired? Hungry? Curious? He was extremely

bored while crossing Kansas but delighted when entering Colorado. Tired at one state border and feeling silly at another. We practiced this exercise crossing each state both coming and going. That's a lot of instruction and practice on changing states of mind, and we acted them out with gusto each time, creating impromptu skits and dialogues around that particular chosen state of mind.

As well, on a hike [REDACTED] and I took while Jay was very kindly setting up camp for all of us, I encouraged [REDACTED] to scream, as loudly as his little body could muster, letting out any negative feelings he might have still been holding on to, into the mighty Rocky Mountains, which I believed could help him feel heard and nurtured, as well as small and protected. I joined with him, just letting out howls and screams to release, side by side, our perceived human troubles into the G-d made expanses of these jutting formations.

Following that trip, I'd often remind [REDACTED] about being able to choose his state (of mind). That no matter how someone else treated him, he could hold on to how he wanted to feel. I thought it would be a helpful coping tool for not only when he was in his stepmother's home but at school and to use throughout his life. See Appendix A for a sample tool from that time.

Along with many other exercises and ideas, I was as strong an advocate for my son then as I am today, although today I wish I had a magical way to restore him to a place of empathy, kindness, and honesty. Such is not the case and, as I try to climb out of the now long-lived stupor into which I've fallen over the many years of his growing darkness, I try to remind myself about some of these tools. When, from ages 6 through around 9, [REDACTED] did not want to go to school, I made a special friend, a doll we named Jonah, from a clothespin that I had him attach to the waistband of his shorts or pants, hidden behind an untucked shirt, to remind him that I loved him and was thinking about him all of the time, even when he was in school. A touchpoint to home. A touchpoint to love.

I found one of these clothespin Jonahs recently and ended up burying it deep in the Pacific Northwest woods, ceremoniously yet without disturbing some nearby moss that seemed remarkably happy and unharmed by the prior season's wildfire smoke, honoring what was and what is healthier to accept no longer is. But it did exist, for certain, at some point. Which means it existed at all points in equal measure to its existence being negated. Both are as true and untrue as the color black includes the color white, while the latter may not be always be measurable by human-made tools. No matter, what is was and shall be. [REDACTED] and I used

to be very close and I was his unwavering advocate. That was true and will always be. And he is capable of dark things. That, too, is true and does not negate other truths.

There is no statute of limitations on a mother's love; as well, there are limits to what a parent can allow.

Meaning is often found in apparent disparities. We can hold two opposite things in our palms and see both for what they are, allowing each to shine brightly. And the myriad unseen things, too. And, although time is not linear, several hard-earned memories are just too painful to confront in the rear view mirror.

And others actually appear as funny as they now seem banal. The first time I met son's paternal grandmother, who lived in [REDACTED] I was 20 and already knocked up by her firstborn of six children to three men. Within minutes of meeting me, she felt my head for horns. Having been raised in and around Philadelphia, I lacked experience with people who had never met a real, live Jewess. I had no idea what this head groping was really about or why she would have thought I was a horned creature. Embarrassed as I feel now to admit, I remember having to look that act up in the library to discern what her thoroughly earnest while wrongly guided head touch was about.

Some pain remains so acute that I had to shut down my feelings, even the good ones, for many years. Particularly during the rise and proliferation of [REDACTED] I was shocked (and sometimes threatened) into silence. When, in the midst of its rise, I learned about past abuses my son had engaged in against other females (not just me, as I had always thought), I left my beautiful Seattle to return to Pittsburgh to be there, up close and personal, to try to guide him back to reality, empathy, and legality.

I failed miserably on all accounts. So much so that I could have wound up dead by my son's hand in my own garage.

Recently, I was thinking back to two episodes that happened in print news rooms. As a young and actually hungry reporter (I went without dinner at least three nights a week to ensure enough food for my son), I had brought [REDACTED] into only two of the news rooms with me. One was *The Jewish Chronicle*, where I was a staff writer, the other at a newsweekly, *In Pittsburgh*, where I was a stringer. At between ages 4 and 6, when [REDACTED] was playing with the copy machine at *The Jewish Chronicle*, he kept telling me it was an ATM (automatic teller machine)

that printed money. Although I affirmatively demonstrated it to be a copier (and laid old-style newsprint on it as the piece to copy), he insisted that piece of machinery located in the news room printed money. The same happened when we were on the South Side in that same city, in the office to discuss with an editor pieces I had written on a couple of occasions. One, in which I wrote about the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II (see Appendix A) and, another, when I had interviewed and written a piece on Floyd Cochran, who was a self-proclaimed "reformed" White supremacist who had served for years as the youth recruiter and fifth ranking officer for Aryan Nation.¹³ In that news room, as well, young [REDACTED] was convinced that the copy machine minted money. While I wanted him, in the instance of the Holocaust piece, to be amazed by the two beautiful men (I took my young son to the photo shoot with me) holding photos of themselves at the time of Liberation and what beautiful Souls they were, the lesson he took from it was somehow about money. To this day, the lost lessons confound me. I guess we are born who we are, afterall.

It hit me: Had the seed for making whatever quantities of money [REDACTED] desired from news and media outlets germinated then? Had he learned to conflate the media with money at such a tender age? And, no matter how often I showed him what a copy machine actually did, he would not accept the truth of its actual function.

Or was this line of thinking just grasping for explanations about something that remained too illogical for me to stomach. Was nature just so much stronger than nurture? Was each Soul born to be exactly who it is, despite circumstances, lessons, and examples?

Or maybe, as mere humans, we are not meant to understand any of it. It's all beyond our reach.

When I read now about such concepts as food insecurity, housing insecurity, crisis pregnancies, and the like, I appreciate how giving what I knew as day-to-day realities are made somehow less overpowering by naming them. It doesn't render them any easier to live with, but the identification somehow legitimizes that which we're living through. That's just how I lived my life in those days.

A few weeks after birthing his child in 1989, I read the poem [REDACTED] had written about us, the last stanza of which read: I married a woman/I don't know her name/Our courtship lasted a day/Our child was born the next.

He, too, was in over his head.

¹³ Note that once he determined I was a Jewess, this self-professed fully reformed Mr. Cochran refused to shake my hand. He said he was uncomfortable making direct contact with Jewish skin.

~ 16 ~

Autism and 50+ shades of loneliness

It's remarkable how positively we can be willing to remember the not so positive.

For example, although I had been continuously harassed by my adoptomère about being what I thought was "artistic" in her thick Philadelphia accent as, later realized, as *autistic*, I had not so much as considered being tested for that particular condition let alone try to get comfortable with that label until I was in my 50's.

On days spent alone with her, the boys out playing and her husband at work as a meat cutter, she'd taunt me about being artistic. Autistic. So although I knew she was trying to treat me viciously as she was doing with or to my body and emotionally, I harbored a positive deeply held association that made me feel, in its own way, proud of my secret artistic pursuits, most of which had to do with writing.

Clearly, I was slow on the uptake. The adoptomère had bullied me for years on many fronts. When not on my physicality, the taunts were centered on what I can now identify as girlhood ASD-specific issues, including but not limited to: swaying my body back and forth while sitting alone in my room, rocking myself and engaging in other self-soothing motions while sitting alone in a dark closet into which she would banish me for hours, possessing unyieldingly deep feelings and empathy, memorizing song lyrics, compulsively adding and subtracting, and that I evidently walked more like a penguin than a human. I had somehow been shockingly blind to the simple baseline data point that I was, in fact, on the spectrum. Not just on it but at a very high end of the scale.

Not looking to invite further day in an day out bullying by my primary captor for these autism-specific qualities, I learned to stifle all outward movements, as well during sessions of sexual abuse. In ASD parlance, I learned early and well how to mask. Somewhere between the ages of 6 and 7, the adoptomère started screaming at me about being too stiff, specifically referring to me as *Robot Althea*, who equally displeased her as did dizzy, passing out, stimming, chanting, or too eerily quiet Althea.

It turns out that, like many ASD females, I had become something of a pro at masking to pass. Code switching was, in fact, something else I learned well. As an outcast in my girlhood home, I had to determine how to pass as something that family would consider a little less not normal. I was already not of their blood, as was screamed at me over and over by the adoptomère that

"blood is thicker than water," as well as that I could, at any time on any day, be "returned" to where I had come from. The irony was lost on me then how I was actually the primary bread winner for that family of five plus three dogs and that I, thus, was in no such danger.

This remarkable blind spot – in my ability to see who or what I was – must have been too heavy a burden to carry in some environments and after some decades had passed. While most companies in the U.S. tout their commitment to diversity, it rarely feels that way from the inside.

For example, working at a Fortune 100 consultancy in my early 40's, I would at times have to duck into the printing room, staffed by an onsite third party smaller company, to just let out intense laughter, moans, jokes, or start dancing, hard, to release – like a steam vent – trying to set free the far too many pent up and overwhelming feelings. In environments that were very overly homogenous with strong corporate (white male heteronormative) cultures, I would feel so foreign that my real self-felt compelled to reveal itself, even if in private nooks and cranny spaces, wildly, deeply, and without censorship. And it probably didn't help that I was being actively bullied there, from high up the chain, about my looks (skin color, breast size, nose size, hair texture, and being generally unattractive – which was very explicitly explained to me as the reason for why I had to be a workhorse, clocking 60 to 95 hours a week (divided between 40+ in-office and from-home home, not even including local travel or, as required, flights), while the "beautiful" woman of equal rank could work far fewer hours (35 hours, on average, per week), because she was, as the bullies told me, a show pony, and that the partners liked looking at her, to boot, her family was well regarded within the local community and was quite wealthy), background (no family to visit on holidays, an adoptee, an unconnected and poor Jew, etc.), and other protected class issues.

At another job, a colleague pointed out that maybe I'm exhausted by the end of the day because, as an introvert, I was just worn down by interactions with others, coupled with having to play it uptight and corporate, as he put it, for more than 70 hours per week. My own biomère, who I would swear never really saw me, could come out with the occasional super on-point observation. She shared once, in a phone call, how "exhausting it must be for you play it in the straight world." By straight she meant the world of work, the corporate space, that place where I am forced to calm my crazy hair and conceal my inappropriate body to pass as acceptable where commerce took hold to propel a paycheck, a chance for health benefits, and coworkers who bullied me less than the adoptomère but more than should ever have been allowed, legally or morally.

At that same firm, I was bullied, shockingly, from a few ranks below, as that bully espoused (with IMs, emails, and other fabricated "proof") that she was directly tied to the leader of the staff side of the firm, capable of causing me to lose my job on a whim and being punished for acts and words I never committed nor said. In the end, that proved true, despite that the leader to whom she referred, when at the Department of Justice, had been ousted for hiring Russian sex workers that he had brought back from taxpayer-paid for trips.

Truth-tellers are marginalized while bullies are rewarded, protected, and trumpeted.

In corporate America, I never found true diversity or peers. As a simple example, I didn't even understand what it meant when a younger and lower ranking moneyed male colleague shared with me where he attended undergrad, from where his graduate degree was earned, or where he summured (a verb) from his boarding school in Connecticut. I hadn't realized how very pass/fail the questions about my past were and that, by either answering honestly or evading the questions altogether, I would fail 100% of the time. Notably, I did experience one actually respectful work culture that was both organically and in practice pro-diversity, namely at a nonprofit tax law inside-the-beltway publishing house/think tank led, at that time, by a gay male.

There were norms that I could never sense let alone be given a playbook for, and while I was trying to hide in plain sight, I had not yet even come to terms with my own Otherness. Equally, I had not tried to comprehend the ways in which my different path – having come from many dangerous foster homes and then through what felt like unending abuses – had interplayed with the coping mechanisms I must have had to develop to appear non-ASD. Having conflated autistic with artistic, too, it makes sense that I'd write poems in private spaces (usually in the bathrooms of my workplaces and that I hoped I would one day compile in a collection entitled *Poemwerken*, comprised of poems not only written on corporate time but also that *had to* leak from my pores to make it through the work day intact – happily, I just finished that book this year, as well).

While my workplaces all espoused the virtue of diversity, none actually operated with any. At best, they had some check-the-box numbers to point to but, in truth, backgrounds that veered from the norm were pressured to stay closeted.

One beautiful nugget that I've held close is when, at a Fortune 100 company, a brilliant Jamaican-born MBA senior analyst witnessed me being bullied by a one level higher colleague and shared with me, after, this episode (in which the bully berated me for not having parents to

visit) the following: *Althea, the next time he talks to you that way, hold your head high and say to him, you don't even know who my father is.* She shared that, for her, Jesus Christ was both her ultimate father and savior. She noted that for me, born a Jew, I could either accept Jesus in that same role or, in the alternative, hold fast to the reality that his father, our G-d of all who dwell on this round earth, would always have my back.

I get weepy thinking about those words even now.

I would eventually attend her wedding to a Nigerian prince. To this day, the best wedding food I've ever had is Jamaican-Nigerian, and I've never in my life – maybe than, perhaps, in India – seen more colorfully, beautifully adorned and elegant women congregated all in one place.

I had different coping mechanisms at different ages, some healthy and some not. For a few years, from around the ages of 4 through 8, I would pick the skin off my right-hand ring finger to self sooth, to the point of rampant infection. In other years, I'd insesantly add and multiply, speaking only at the right moment and often in measured 4/4 or 4/8 piano tempos. In times of trouble, it would be in 3/5. Being highly light-, smell-, and noise-affected, I'd push imaginary buttons at the base of my neck in an attempt to dim those senses, trying to will away the over-stimulation and exhaustion each brought. In a home of always wet carpets, bedding, and sofas from dog urine that triggered Trudi's hysteria, there was never a minute off from the cacophonous rancor of the flourescent lit stink of Shasta Road¹⁹. Upon his return from work every day, understandably exhausted by the long and early started hours he kept, the screaming would turn from me to Joel, other than when she recited the daily rundown of my missteps and misdeeds, some fictitious, that ranged from not having dusted something properly or having not served her or one of her sons iced tea with appropriate haste upon demand.

I may never be able to determine what oddities and, with a better spin, what positive coping skills were the result of ASD vs. extreme childhood abuse and neglect. It is just as foreseeable, for example, that a girl taking it down the throat every night would also abhor anything sticky.

¹⁹ I lived from ages roughly 4 to 18 on Shasta Road, a development in the suburban metro Philadelphia area of Montgomery County. There were clues to be found there in terms of my Soul's path. The roads were named Rainier, Shasta, Yellowstone, Boulder, Sierra, and others that reflected the mountain chains and glacial volcanos I now so deeply revere here in the West and go to for healing. Shortly after moving to Seattle in summer 2008, I adopted the Olympics as my father and Mt. Rainier as my mother. In 2010, when pumping gas alone at a station *en route* to hike Mt. St. Helen's, I thought back to when I was 11, at Trudi's home, who remarked on the television news spot about the volcanic eruption and what kind of "stupid hippies" would want to live on or near a volcano. I'm now one of them, as the only sense of home I've ever felt is when gazing upon the Pacific Northwest's naturally occurring jutting edifices to G-d.

with the sole exception of tahini (to this day, I will not eat mayonaise, yogurt, sour cream, or anything else that reminds me of sexual bodily fluids). I never had the time to think through what having been drugged to sleep with phenobarbital as a young child would mean for my lifelong insomnia. I may never understand what made me an Empath, able to feel others' pain before they so much as name it, let alone reveal it to someone else.

One of the resolutions I made to myself over the 2020 Covid lockdown was to just be okay with acknowledging these issues.

Not every secret needs to be shared, and not every mystery needs to be solved.

Tolerating bullies and the lies they tell only serves to empower them. My overly high threshold for abuse undoubtedly primed me towards silence while my son erected his fabricated backstory in the media, who ate it up without fact checking or second guessing. The several times I had tried to expose illegal or bad behavior – the Azeffs, Dan, and in the workplace – no action was ever taken and, in each case, the bullies were thoroughly and wildly empowered all the more. Especially when [REDACTED] was the bully. And shock around his actions tended to cause me to freeze, even for seasons at a time. At some points, it was for years.

For example, while I did send a letter about Dan to the Board in PA that regulates actual therapists within its jurisdiction, nothing was done. Maybe it was my decades of experience that no one cared when whistles were blown that set me up to be a weak parent. When I asked my son directly why early pieces [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] contained utter untruths and fabrications, he (and this was *before* Trump was in power) replied that I knew how dishonest the media was and that he was powerless to help them get the facts right. I knew this assertion to be patently untrue. As well when [REDACTED] somehow quoted me yet never actually reached out to me to either fact check nor obtain my approval. But his girlfriend was about to rejoin us in that restaurant, carrying her tray to our table. I was more inclined to help him look good in front of her – to not call him out – than to live in truth. And I knew the consequences of calling him on anything. I chose to not have the strength to stand up to him. That was bad parenting that would ultimately help play into him living as an outright grifter and on her dime. The seeds were already planted for that to happen, of course, but I can't help wondering what would have happened had I made a vociferous stink about the actual facts. When I called him out in more subtle albeit on-point ways, he would rant to me for hours.

I had clearly stumbled through my educational, social, and professional lives retarded in some otherwise glaringly obvious aspects of self development. It took until my 40's to accept the PTSD diagnosis, and it took until 50 to 51 to truly "hear" the artistic for the *autistic* that was intended.

And while the family structure in which I raised myself stayed afloat based on the disability money earned while keeping me down, among many other forms of payments based on my labor, I never thought to check-the-box as disabled even once as an adult. I still fail at standardized tests while exceling at lateral, non-linear thinking. Whether for employment forms or medical histories, I have always held myself to an extreme normie imperative.

~ 17 ~

Resilience is resistance

What is sufficient is not always necessary. And not all results flow from adequate data.

Like so many adults with a super high ACE (adverse childhood experiences) score, I am at heightened risk for many negative health effects. In addition to having lived in silent witness as a child, I had to carry the various kinds of weight that ACE creates. Shortened telomeres, chronic pain, and even the strain of trying to stand straight with the weight of my breasts that grew overly large from constant stimulation of sex hormones at inappropriate stages of childhood development. My double D's are a literal cross for me to bear daily.

With an overactive fight or flight system, even my skin remains overly sensitive to this day. If looking closely enough, one can read my emotions by how I stand and by the condition of my skin. And until I reached my early 50's, my hair used to have a language all its own, as well, changing colors through the seasons.

And while I'm the adopted daughter of a Munchausen by proxy adoptomère, subject to daily bodily and medical tortures, as well as the unending buzz of hormonal and endocrine responses to emotional, sexual, and physical trauma, I almost never succumb to my body's deeply held memories and chronic pain. I try to stay in motion and, when not in lockdown and when coffers allow, get bodywork in the form of Thai massage, acupuncture, or rolfing.

Resilience is a choice, not chance.

That thought bears repeating: Resilience is a choice. You will not achieve any level of recovery passively.

Like anything worth having or earning, you must work for it.

Likewise, your resilience might be your most clear and affirmative act of resistance. By just surviving your torture, you are still here. You still bear witness. And you resisted your abusers' goals for you. You didn't die. You didn't end up in a ditch. You may be wandering your own barren desert, but you're never truly lost.

Letting out the trauma – not unlike a dog shaking in the closet – can happen as and how you choose. While I cannot recommend the healing modality for you, I can say that – if you deeply

learn the arts of quietude and solitude – your body will speak to you, directly, in a language you can understand. It will tell you what to do, when, and where.

For some, your body might speak to you in symbols. For others, it may come through dreams. Still others may only be able to hear their bodies after a long trek or while lost in the wilds of a wind-swept sand storm.

No one knows you like your own bodily cells, yet no one can listen better to their messages than you.

Some trauma can only depart in nonsequential fragments. Some through tiny vents. Some can only come out in a community when it feels recongnized – like begets like. Some prefers the private space within our own bodily tissues.

There are some pains so private even your closest friends will never know of them.

That's okay.

Not everything needs to be shared, and not everything needs to be seen let alone validated by others. More often than not, no one understands what you are saying, anyway.

And perhaps you don't know more than two people in the panalopy of Souls you've encountered who could have withstood the pain you've known.

You are so strong they can't even comprehend your journey.

They don't recognize let alone see your suffering.

And yet, you remain you.

None of us needs witnesses, and none needs to survive for anything but our Soul's purpose.

Those who wish us dead lose by our mere persitent existence, and those who wanted to cage us in shame, in closets, or behind bars, rise up against our hard fought resilience, which is the living resistance to their threats and lies.

I've shared, at best, 8% of the horrors I've witnessed in this collection of essays. And I tried to keep to the more "G-rated" stories.

As pertains my son, I came forward to opposing counsel to try to save another woman from being punished by [REDACTED] unquenchable wrath and greed.

It oftentimes takes only a small voice crawling out of the darkness.

But what you here is between you and you, as well as between you and your higher power
and it's not for me to name that relationship or even to recommend if you hold such a belief.
Such is the nature of private affairs.

I can serve only as a gentle reminder you that you matter. No matter how faceless you might
feel in this moment, there can be a tomorrow to unfold ... and a tomorrow after that one.

And another.

Be there for you. And if you happen to believe in other worldly realities, be there, too, for
whomever it is that you consider to be the ultimate universally revered You.

~ 18 ~

The death of truth in the U.S. came early and was personal for me [REDACTED]

Some things appear to lack context without situational relationship.

For example, I choose to keep a few physical momentos as proof of my own existence and as proof of fact which, in turn, helps me remember that I'm the sane one in all of this. My often narcissistic abusers used to rely on the accusation – as a weapon of control – that I was crazy. My adoptomère had me living under threat, daily, of locking me up and throwing away the key. She said the only evidence that she'd need, which would be irrefutable, was the mental health histories of each of my birth parents and, interestingly, my own writing, which documented my experiences in her home.

Facts were all I had on my side. As a girl, newspapers were gospel to me. While I always sensed that there was inherent bias, I read as many varied papers as I could to balance the voice in any particular story. My son took that pleasure away, as he manipulated media outlets from adolescence through today. Please refer to Appendix E, in which I describe, albeit lightly, the path that led to the real story [REDACTED] And Dan, the Azeffs, and [REDACTED] eroded my attachment to the belief in the saving graces of the rule of law.

And although I started noticing its rapid decline in the early 1990's, my country also veered from the rule of law as it did the ability to think for itself. It obeyed the siren call of corporate control over its government like it did its drive-through value meals.

Having had to live the part daily and all through the nights to keep a controlling adoptomère alive – as I was reminded several days a week that she could die from an asthma attack that my behavior would cause (behavior defined as talking about any of the abuses, not cleaning the house properly, not serving the boys quickly enough, not cleaning up semen with great haste, not modeling lingerie with a smile, etc.) – I became so adept at keeping abusers happy that I, although unintentionally, am concerned that I helped to create an abuser in the next generation. I was [REDACTED] full-time caretaker and slave, feeding his every whim and allowing his strong emotional impulses to guide the home environment. Such is not the way of strong parenting. My son's girlfriend would have very well never have been so controlled if [REDACTED] had not learned to be such a controller.

To this day, he retains almost complete control over his own father.

When not outright bullying [REDACTED] also be such a charming abuser, particularly of women.

Common wisdom suggests that sons marry their mothers.²⁰ My son found in his girlfriend the type of giver he had in me. She has an impeccable work ethic and does whatever she must to keep him comfortable. She lets him set the tone for the house. She doesn't question his so-called business and media dealings. She lets him lead. She looks the other way when he is busy committing crimes. Although he has the money to pay the mortgage, she did so, willingly.

To be clear, I did set healthy boundaries and rules at home for my son, from the start. But, looking back, without his father doing the same in his home, as well our son teaming up with his father against me, it was foreseeable that our son's lesser tendencies (taking short cuts, living off others, committing fraud, instigating endless baseless yet harrassing lawsuits, becoming a skilled manipulator) would prevail. While for years I explicitly warned his father of the dangers associated with teaching our son to not have consequences for various bad acts, as well as for speaking ill of me to his son, consistently and for years, to the extent of teaming up together to launch at least one surprise and very nasty lawsuit in the summer before [REDACTED] entry into 9th grade, nothing good would come of these practices in terms of his ability to develop meaningful self esteem or to someday becoming an actually accountable adult, let alone a self-supporting one.

And to be explicitly direct about the media: Had any one member (it only would have taken one) of the numerous media outlets that have covered [REDACTED] around [REDACTED] performed even the most cursory level of research on [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] that journalist (1) would have not only seen the schisms in his purported back story, he or she would (2) have been able to predict events that could be triggered by [REDACTED], including that [REDACTED]. It was as foreseeable as it was obvious. The media chose to not see what was right in front of its eyes, no different than how it missed the rise of Q, formerly fringe now mainstream hate groups, and random conspiracy thinkers. They would have recognized, too, not only the chilling effect

²⁰ In this case, not wife, but live-in girlfriend. He would often share for me his many reasons why he would never marry her, almost all of which had nothing to do with her but with his own fear, paranoia, misogynist judgments, and obsession over money. Interestingly, while he presented himself as so broke to her that he had to borrow sums in addition to her covering all of their living expenses, it was only in Winter 2021 that I learned about the "substantial" money damages paid to him, based on litigation financed through others. He risked nothing to win big and then withheld such unearned wealth from the partner who was actually work hard just to keep a roof over his head.

██████'s bullying has on truth but equally on scientific and academic inquiry, as well as on the exercise of actual journalism.

Physical artifacts as touchstones to reality

Because I've been gaslighted by narcissists from the beginning, I resolutely yet secretly held on to some physical artifacts of actual events to remind myself of actual truth. For instance, I still have the original deck of girlie cards purchased from Spencer's gift shop in the Plymouth Meeting mall with which I was forced to play strip poker as a young girl. As well, I retained the forged receipts of the adoptomère charging up a storm on a credit card she had issued in my name, through forgery, with her signatures pretending to be me while I labored through birth for four days in the hospital and stayed an extra week on IV antibiotics. Although I literally could not have been in Philadelphia while birthing in a Pittsburgh women's hospital, the Pittsburgh police refused to write a report (they said that children steal from their parents, not vice versa). The death certificate of my con artist birth father, whose lies persisted through death and taught me – along with my son's frighteningly adept manipulation of the media over many years – the untruth of so-called facts, as created and perpetuated by very weak and privileged men and the women who prop them up. The activities that my son was actually obsessed with from around

_____ I retain these artifacts.

I was brought up in a country in which the criminals, particularly the white ones, are the victors.

Rapists always win. Abusers never pay. Victims are meant to be silenced and those who talk will be gaslighted, threatened, and/or physically harmed.

Conartists will be believed.

Original thought will be punished, and those who don't prop up the majority narrative will be shunned into lonely, dark corners.

Jeffrey Epstein et al

In the summer of 2019, I wanted to delve deeply into my still rather hidden background of paid-for and unpaid sexual and economic abuse by Jewish men by reaching out to an inmate in the MCC jail in New York City. I had written to Jeffrey Epstein, hoping to start a dialogue that would help us each explore being the abuser and the abused, respectively, from both a secular and specifically Jewish context. That hope was extinguished with his death in August, in jail. I had

called and spoken with an MCC guard late Friday afternoon, East Coast time, of what would be his last day. Hanging up from that call, I put myself to bed – which was midday West Coast time – remaining there until the early morning, feeling some dark and ominous energy. Before 6 a.m., I learned that he, Epstein, was dead.

So I kept writing, hoping that the process would answer some of the mysteries around that certain brand of Jewish conman I had known so intimately in my own life and that was more and more seeping into the news (Epstein, Madoff, Weinstein, Dershowitz, the Sackler family, Cohen, and others, including my own child, [REDACTED] although yet to be discovered as a con).

What is it to appear a *mentsch* but not to be one, actually? And why couldn't I put to words, at long last, the mysteries that confounded me throughout this lifetime?

Narcisists scapegoat truth tellers. I was scapegoated by the adoptomère and attacked, diminished, and gaslighted by both my biopère and by [REDACTED] who proved to be the best gaslighter of their lot. I get it, up close, first-hand, and on a deeply personal level.

When gaslighting means normalizing

[Written 7 January 2021] Yesterday's failed coup attempt – which could not have been carried out with at least some federal level or military assistance – will go largely unpunished. Many who participated will just end up gaslighting those who know what they saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears. The more disturbing aspects of what occurred yesterday was not so much the numbers of hate-filled fear mongerers but the State that did not act with haste or with any sense of parallelism to what they did just months before in Lafayette Square. The largely privileged white male insurgents, invited by the U.S. President, were treated with the kind of hospitality one might show a nuisance squirrel that runs across a freshly mowed, suspiciously green American lawn. They were all but handed hot towels and snacks. You can either believe that Capitol-area law enforcement is slow to react, was ill-prepared (which would have had to have been wilfull considering all of the showmanship and pomp around the protest), and/or unable to handle insurgence or that at least some ranks were complicit in attempted coup. Racism was no doubt fueled by the dual wins for Senate seats from Georgia, filled by a Jew and a Black man. I live in a fallen Empire that not only has not taken a moment to look at itself, not even after Charlottesville or the plotted kidnapping of Michigan's governor, let alone following 9/11, it is not even set up to have, for example, a female scientist, such as an Angela Merckel, at its helm.

It is an engrained patriarchy wrapped in a Confederate flag.

Weeks later and now watching Biden's inauguration from my laptop screen, I can't help but ponder how my country claims to shout for women's rights while denying, in some states, access to birth control. Many in the United States were straight out bullied for the past 4+ years by the highest echelons of power in our Republic.

From that October Friday in 2015 when the Access Hollywood tapes²¹ were released through today's only cursory-peaceful transition of power, we have been mocked, yelled at, and put behind the so-called President who was, before anything and anyone else, promoted his own reign over the wellbeing of the country for which he was meant to serve.

Many of us endured long-term bullying that was normalized by unending media coverage of this toxic narcissist who busied himself with enriching his family and entrenching his power while dramatically hastening the United States' decline as a trusted partner on the world stage, let alone as a beacon of hope, civility, or human rights. Those of us who are high empathy take in the cruel invectives he slung at politicians, private citizens, immigrants, foreigners, those with physical challenges, and others. Consistently, he spoke well only of a handful of dictators, overtly modeling his behaviors on what he admired most in those men.

My own son's manipulation of news outlets

My son became adept at manipulating news outlets years ago, when he still an adolescent. His trajectory provides insight into the later-occurring current events of the ability for [REDACTED] to affect reality [REDACTED] the rise of Trump, QAnon, and other conspiracy theories, and the ability to radicalize marginalized people from afar, online. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

²¹ I personally found the phrase "grab them by the pussy" to be hard to handle, no pun intended. Once, when I was nine, Robert told me to move closer to him, after he had forced me to undress. I did not move closer to him. So he leaned forward and inserted his fingers into my two holes, telling me as he was doing so that he'd "grab me by the twat," which he did. Being in a bowling league at the time, I remember thinking that I only slightly differed from a impeccably smooth bowling ball, which had three holes. Years later, to hear the future commander of chief utter similar words was, to be blunt, devastating. These sorts of acts were now being rewarded and seemingly, I felt, codified at the highest levels of power.

[REDACTED]

_____ days that ultimately led to the weaponization of search engine manipulation for his own fame, laziness, and glory across almost all U.S. news media and _____

The most dangerous thing our populace can do is to remain silent. As I have personally lived through this danger, I write as a voice to the damage done. Unchecked power – built on lies and manipulation – will only further empower those who erect such falsities.

I question whether having grown up the target of incessant bullying by a toxically narcissistic adoptomère primed me to, among other things, teach others that it's okay, and maybe even expected, that they bully me to empower themselves.

Whether in the workplace, among friends, or within the confines of my own mothering skills, I no doubt over-fawned and over-caretook and thus displayed the inability to set healthy boundaries. While these skills were bettered through the years and with much conscientious awareness, like with any real change, it's a journey. When stressed, when tired, when anxious, when being actively bullied, I too often fall off the wagon, so to speak, resorting to allowing this kind of negative behavior, and then often turning it inwards, against myself.

When, for instance, my son was admittedly speeding (the first time he told me, he was doing 90, the second time, 85) on the PA Turnpike, he straight after and later bragged to me about having lied to the police so easily (that it was an accident and that he had not been speeding). The insurance company rewarded him and, although I told _____ father about his early and full confession to me, his father responded with his characteristic lack of admonishment let alone any call for accountability. And, as always, he also chose not to believe me. _____ learned that he pleased his father by lying to the authorities (as he would later do about the cause of a house fire for which they were also rewarded by another insurance company) and, in general, by manipulating and denigrating me.

In the vignette I included about my would-be mother-in-law purporting that Jews have horns, I remember thinking that she had just seen me wrongly on the spiritual plane. While I considered my spiritual familiar to be dog, perhaps she had mistaken it for goat. I contend that, in her case, there were no ill intentions. She had merely yet wholesalely bought into the stereotypes and prejudices around and against Jews – who make up only 1% of the world's population – that were so readily abundant in her environment. To this day, I don't consider her to have an

actually mean-intended bone in her body. She just might not be on a path to search for the deeper realities that belie the headlines.

Likewise, an otherwise seemingly pleasant person last year told me that he, "Didn't even know what a Jew was, other than that they run the media, the banking system, and Hollywood." And he remained blind to the bespectacled frizzy-haired Jewess next to him, pouring a cup of herbal tea and who in no way ran any of those systems, nor did any Jews she knew IRL or otherwise.

The QAnon conspiracy peddlers revitalize the age-old blood libels in their mythical backstory about the cabal of leaders, politicians, corporate magnates, Hollywood elites, and the like who purportedly rape and then cannibalize children, drinking their blood. But it take only a cursory knowledge of history to know better. Having met many of these conspiracy peddlers – I lived in Olympia for only 14 months by the time the COVID lockdown went into effect – and, by then, at least one to two of every three people I met were QAnon. I have few if any friends here.

In this oft thought of snowflake bastion of liberal thinking, there seems to mostly dwell only creatures from the extreme far left and the extreme far right, with scant little in between. And among those that hailed from places like Yelm, Rainier, Tenino, and other parts within its midst (as well as a large number right in Olympia proper), I also met current or former devotees of yet another populist leader for marginalized souls, a tax dodging cult leader, J.Z. Knight, who had them convinced for decades that she channeled a 35,000+ year old male warrior named Ramtha and that it was their duty to do his bidding.

I wish I was making this up.²²

If I had the time or inclination, in fact, I would write an in-depth piece on the actual and still very much happening in 2021 underground, shadow economy run by her and, separately, disciples from her School of Enlightemnet. Having met not one but a couple dozen of these adults – some of whom are well educated and some of whom emigrated to the U.S. from various destinations in Europe and Australia – I would provide details on how they operate in plain sight and are about as actively anti-Semitic, anti-Democratic, anti-American, non-taxpaying, and anti-child safety a group as you'll ever find.

²² For reporting on this cult, just look in any search engine. For quick reference, see, among many other articles: <https://www.spicenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2014/ramtha-11ed> or <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2607940/73million-tax-evasion-Middle-East-money-laundering-35-000-year-old-mystic-warrior-How-Romanian-couple-brought-local-winery-brink-collapse-joining-alleged-cult.html> or http://www.yelmonline.com/news/local_news/article_be1c8536-5443-5d87-a33e-16797adec395.html

One, who authored a self-published book about her purported one-on-one interactions with the 35,000+ year old male warrior spirit, Ramtha, has been swindling the State of Washington for unemployment money she shares with her overseas online love scammer boyfriend (whom, now going on two years, she's of course still not met in person) while collecting Social Security retirement money, at age 70, based on her now passed husband's work record.

It's understandable that cult followers would also so easily fall prey to QAnon conspiracy theories, including the resurrection of the blood libels that, in recent times, always seem to link to the Rothschild family, George Soros, and otherwise wildly anti-Semitic tropes and targets.

That said, many others followed suit.

Their allegiance – that leads to passionate, often vitriolic adherence to conspiracy theories and to the cult of personality that overtook the Republican party – is not so easily traceable.

These are dangerous times.

Sartre's *Les Mouches* was first staged in Nazi Occupied France and, through the mythical Orestes, taught us, among other things: *Neither slave nor master. I am my freedom.*

My son is his own man. [REDACTED] He has a now long-established pattern of manipulating the masses and targeting and profiting off of women and the media. He has a long-established pattern, too, of raising money to finance what, if not stopped, will be an endless stream of litigation to silence those who question his backstory, his tactics, his funding, or his approach to questioning (nay, often attacking) the porn industry.

He is, in short, a con artist and a criminal.

My silence – any silence – equals acceptance and, if taken too far, can morph into absolute pardon. We normalize that which we ignore. We rubber stamp that which we excuse, no matter how vile. I've seen it as a mother, I've seen it as a daughter, and I'm seeing it as a citizen of these so-called united states.

As the mother of an adult son who several times from 2016 through the better part of 2019 complained to me of how hard it is for straight white males and, more recently, how he understood what the Proud Boys were fighting for, despite his fear that his biological maternal

Jewish lineage was easily traceable – who himself had a large arsenal despite untreated and severe mental health issues – was frustrated by how I didn't understand his so-called plight.

I did not and I still do not.

He had things easy with the way paved for him. When he could no longer milk me emotionally and financially through abuse and threats, he turned to other women, in this case, young women, professional women, and to the media. And he always had his own father in his corner.

Not all people in recovery got there by way of heroin or meth.

For some, our hamartia is something more difficult to detect with the naked eye.

The U.S. is as riddled with broken families as it is abandoned pickup trucks that line the streets of its once industrious Rust Belt towns, as junkies' needles inject our highway system and bridges with further decay and despair, sometimes from beneath heavily traveled overpasses, as the homeless that live there light fires just trying to stay warm.

We're all just one step from hitting rock bottom yet sipping on \$5 coffees.

We're as degraded by splintered families as we are by our crumbling highway system. We can't get high speed rail to interconnect us, yet participants in an anti-BLM protest come from our farthest shores armed with long guns. And this is not a geographically insubstantial country.

Our rampants red glare are on fire, like in California and even in the Pacific Northwest. Our fields of amber have dried up like a North African desert. We starved and sometimes killed migrant children in our care. We ignored hundreds of thousands of pandemic deaths while the then president lapped up golf games like doughnuts.

We cared more about a random caged tiger on Netflix than children locked down with their abusive families, with no teacher able to suspect or to report the abuse they endured.

We ignored the call for a living wage.

We hid from ourselves and our own worst impulses

While we baked bread and shared tips on how to mix our own cocktails.

We all remain our own worst enemy and our own lost cause.

The pandemic could have helped us to usher in this Age of Aquarius but

It instead made U.S. Americans even meaner, if that is possible.

We came unglued while cementing the unacceptable Otherness of our own neighbors.

We lamented our own fates with just a groan from our overstuffed couches.

The U.S. is a falsely macho while limping oligarchy.

It punishes the circumspect while rewarding its con artists.

But your resilience can become your resistance.

Those around you may abscond with your happiness but cannot even touch your Joy.

Hold on to your Truth.

You are a miracle.

The Infinite has your back

And your front.

~ Appendices ~

(A) Documentation of several of the claims made in this book:

How it all started, 10 months after Trudi told me where I came from and my original last name, I wrote to the agency. I wasn't a coffee drinker in those days, nor was [REDACTED], so not sure what the stain is on the envelope. And it's too dark to have been from tea. That said, I photographed the agency's reply just today, 27 Feb. 2021, as follows:



Pictured below is one of the many forms that described me as unadoptable for routine measures. The reasons varied by form and, as JF&CS social worker Ethel Indursky would later share with me (when I reached out to her years ago), in those days, they always tried to paint foster kids' experiences in the most glowing terms possible for purposes of our medical records.

She shared many and highly relevant details, including how the car broke down when she was driving my biomère to the abortion clinic, over state lines, to terminate her pregnancy with me, but how the car broke down and she thus had to finish out the pregnancy, even receiving ECT and taking various psych meds while I was in her. Ms. Indursky shared, too, how long it would take for me to recover between sessions of babyhood abuse. She personally cleaned the safety pin (how diapers were fastened in those days) holes in my stomach, as well as put salve on my "somehow traumatized" infant vagina.

| | |
|------|---|
| M.D. | Developmental appraisal. (See letter in file) Urine negative for PKU. Child has average ability in view of severe psychiatric history, but not adoptable for routine measures and should be by someone who knows history and is willing to risk. Placement should be in a medically-educated in a physician's family if possible as much as possible. Not to be considered for routine adoption. Lazy baby. Does not roll over. HT 23" WT 11 lbs. 13 ozs. gained 11 ozs. St-ilac, cereal, fruit juices, poly-vi-tol. DPT #2 DPT #3 |
| M.D. | HT 24" WT 13 lbs. 7 ozs. |
| M.D. | HT 25" WT 16 lbs. gained 3 lbs. roll over, 7 months return in 10 days |

[As retyped herein, in pertinent part: "Child has average ability in view of severe psychiatric history (my note: this was written when I was two months of age so, clearly, referring to biological psych history, not my own), and should be adopted by someone who knows history is and is willing to assume that risk. Placement should be in a medically-educated or in a physician's family if possible as much as possible. (sic) Not to be considered for routine adoption. Lazy baby.]

Now aged 52 years, I note that, in the middle of the night, I am still lazy and don't enjoy rolling on to my decidedly arthritic hips. :-) Another equally funny observation, from a later report, is that "Baby Althea is considered to be a between-the-meal eater. She takes the M and M very well." To this day, I remain a between-the-meal eater who has an overfondness for M&M's original milk chocolate candies. :-)

As well, she Ms. Indursky (and Carol, one of Dan's wives) shared that I had, in fact, met Dan, several times, as he remained unsure for some time about fully relinquishing his rights (and, as reported, held on for years to his firstborn daughter, Judy). While I have nothing but very warm feelings for this social worker, Carol, my favorite (and competing with Gloria as most tragic of Dan's ex-wives, as each required electric shock therapy treatments during and/or after surviving Dan), does not feel likewise. I trust Carol implicitly, so I feel compelled to share that she, Carol, expressed to me that the social worker should have fought harder for each of us and that she, Carol, had even expressed her own strong interest in raising both of Dan's daughters. I retype below this image the exact words, as some appear rubbed out/rubbed thin in this image.

From age 4, displaying signs of epilepsy (and who wouldn't, having been shaken to the point of head bobbing round and round), followed by the onset of what would become several years of putting considerable quantities of Phenobarbital into my system. Notably, I had caught myself up by 4 years old to be considered on a normal growth and development pattern, otherwise:

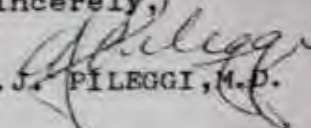
According to the family, Althes was in her usual state of health until 6 A.M. of 3-15-73 when she apparently screamed out, the family ran to her and found her foaming at the mouth. She then became quite stiff, her eyes rolled back, she went limp and lost control of her bladder function. She then woke up for a short period of time and then fell into a deep sleep. She then again woke up, gagged and vomited up some mucous and some bile stained material.

Examination today revealed a cooperative, somewhat pale 4 and 2/ year old white female in no distress who weighed 35 pounds and who was 38 1/2 inches in height. Her head was normocephalic, measuring 19 1/2 inches in circumference. Examination of the eyes revealed the pupils to be bilaterally constricted because of some drops she was getting from an ophthalmologist because of an internal strabismus. There was still a suggestion of a mild internal strabismus at this time. Funduscopic examination was not very satisfactory because of the pupillary constriction. There was no

ay and bone age were 2.5 years.
discussion was then held with the Azeff's concerning ~~our~~ Althea
cerning the possibilities of a child who has an afebrile sei-
was then given 60 mgms. of Phenobarbital IM and started on
phenobarbital by mouth at 30 mgms. twice daily. I plan to see the
child on a follow up visit with an EEG on March 26th. The most
likely possibility considering her normal growth and development
and the normal studies as noted above would be that of an idiop-
sylvic disorder, however I feel that time will further clar-
ify this.

Thank you for allowing me to see Althea and I will keep you
informed as to our follow up visits.

Sincerely,


A.J. PILEGGI, M.D.

ch

Children's
HOSPITAL OF PITTSBURGH

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION DISORDERS
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PITTSBURGH
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE CONSULTATION

NAME [REDACTED]
BIRTHDATE [REDACTED]
UNIT NUMBER [REDACTED]
PARENT(S) [REDACTED]
ADDRESS [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE [REDACTED]
REFERRAL SOURCE [REDACTED]
ADDRESS [REDACTED]
DATE OF ASSESSMENT 09-27-82

18-27-82

[REDACTED]

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

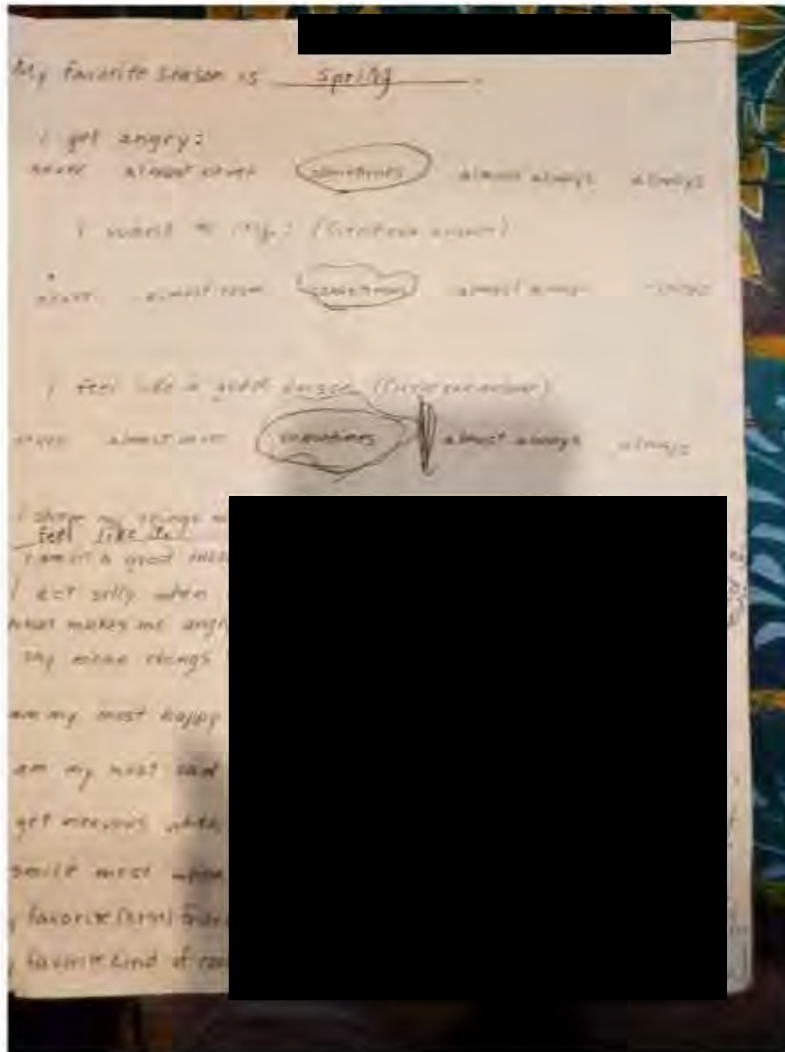
[REDACTED] contacted the department in July following telephone consultation with Dr. Kartear. Dr. Kartear has been monitoring [REDACTED] development of expressive language skills and also his improving clarity of articulation. As he approached his third birthday, she expressed more concern to Mrs. Rhodes and the two decided to seek professional consultation.

[REDACTED]'s medical history is characterized by repeated and frequent otitis media episodes beginning at about ten months of age and lasting through the second year of life. [REDACTED] indicates that he was about to become a candidate for bilateral myringotomy with placement of tubes when the problem appeared to resolve. He has not had an ear infection since the end of his second year.

[REDACTED] was at home with [REDACTED]. She provided him with intensive language stimulation but also agrees that she was so attuned to his needs that there may not have been much expectation for him to communicate them explicitly. In May of this year [REDACTED] began to spend nine hours a week at the Children's Center. [REDACTED] noted with some amazement that his expressive communicative behavior began to expand immediately. Within a matter of a week he was using more single words and beginning to combine some words. Since that time, [REDACTED] communicative skills have blossomed. However, the parents continue to experience some anxiety with regard to the clarity of his articulation. Interestingly, however, [REDACTED] reports during today's assessment that [REDACTED] articulation has improved even since her initial telephone contact with us a month and a half ago.

²³ And, included in a poem I wrote in 1989 called *I Changed My Name When I Married . . .* I wrote, "... because everything is patriarchal anyway, any my maiden name is just my father's, who I like far less than my husband." If I could go back in time, I would have dropped any surname, period. Or I would have just added a punctuation mark after my name, such as "Althea:" ... as a Jewess, however, maybe I should be (((Althea))) to alert anti-Semites?

While not at all medical, some documentation of the normal "check ins I used to help [REDACTED] develop coping skills, recognize his feelings, and choose his state of mind, as written about in Chapter 15. This particular two-sided exercise was authored by me and filled out by my then 10 ½ year old son. In addition to the approximately 15 extra hours of created-for-him supplemental schoolwork (a sort of early version of home schooling in which I focused on writing, reading, math, art, art history, music, foreign languages, and science), I would create to help my son with emotions and feelings, in addition to our long talks about his feelings or about the goings on of each of his days, to confirm he felt seen and heard no matter the day, season, or circumstances. Hence, he received at least 20 hours of homeschooling a week to supplement his public school education. [REDACTED] felt so comfortable with these exercises, he would often add question prompts, as seen on side two of the pictured. Side 1 of 2:



Side 2 of 2:

No libe ~~from~~ bro.

Blade 2

बिना

1/24/42

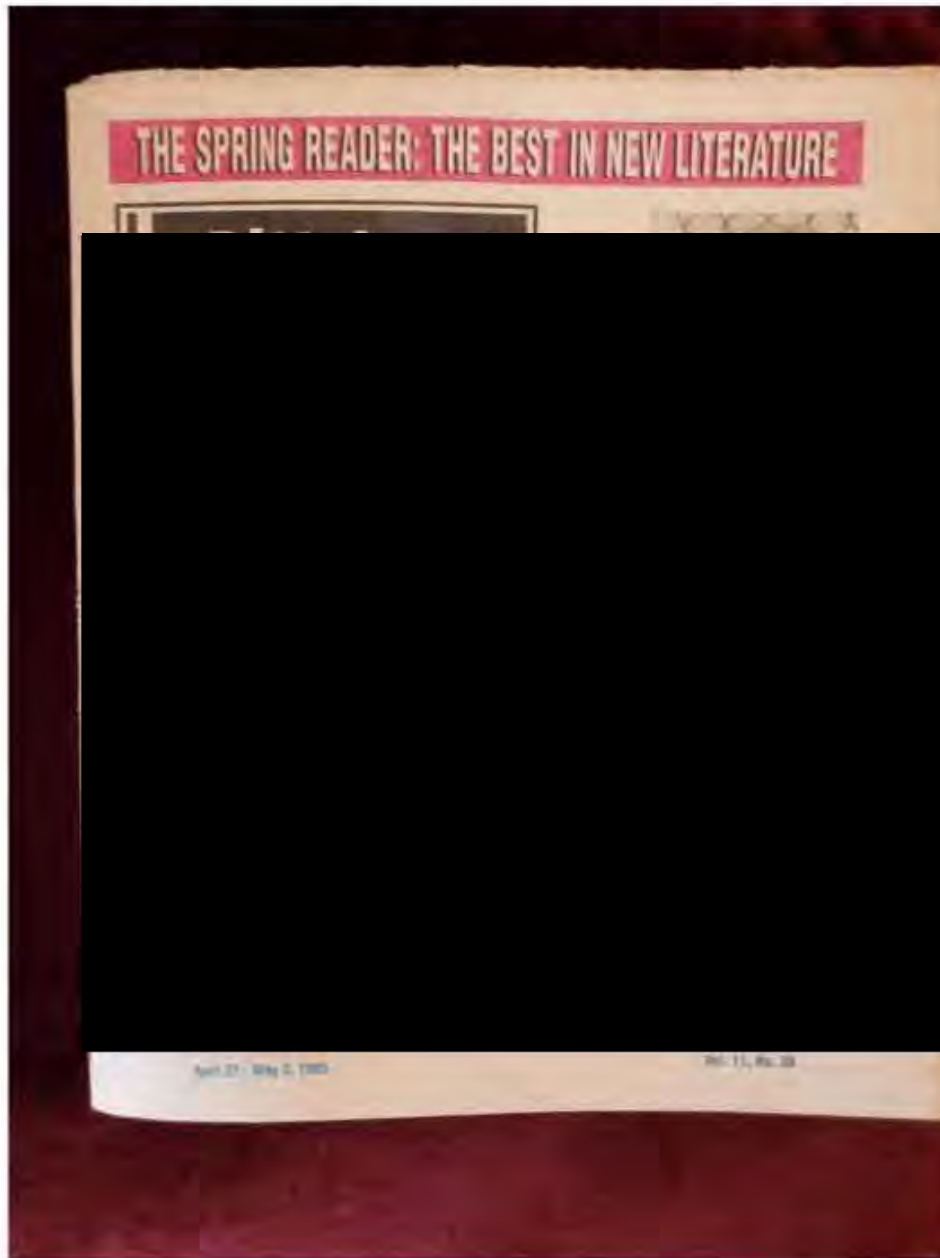
When I am at my desk, these specific
things seem bad to me: [redacted] do not say hi or by
[redacted] do not care about me when I am sad.

They always favor ~~the~~ the dumb guy

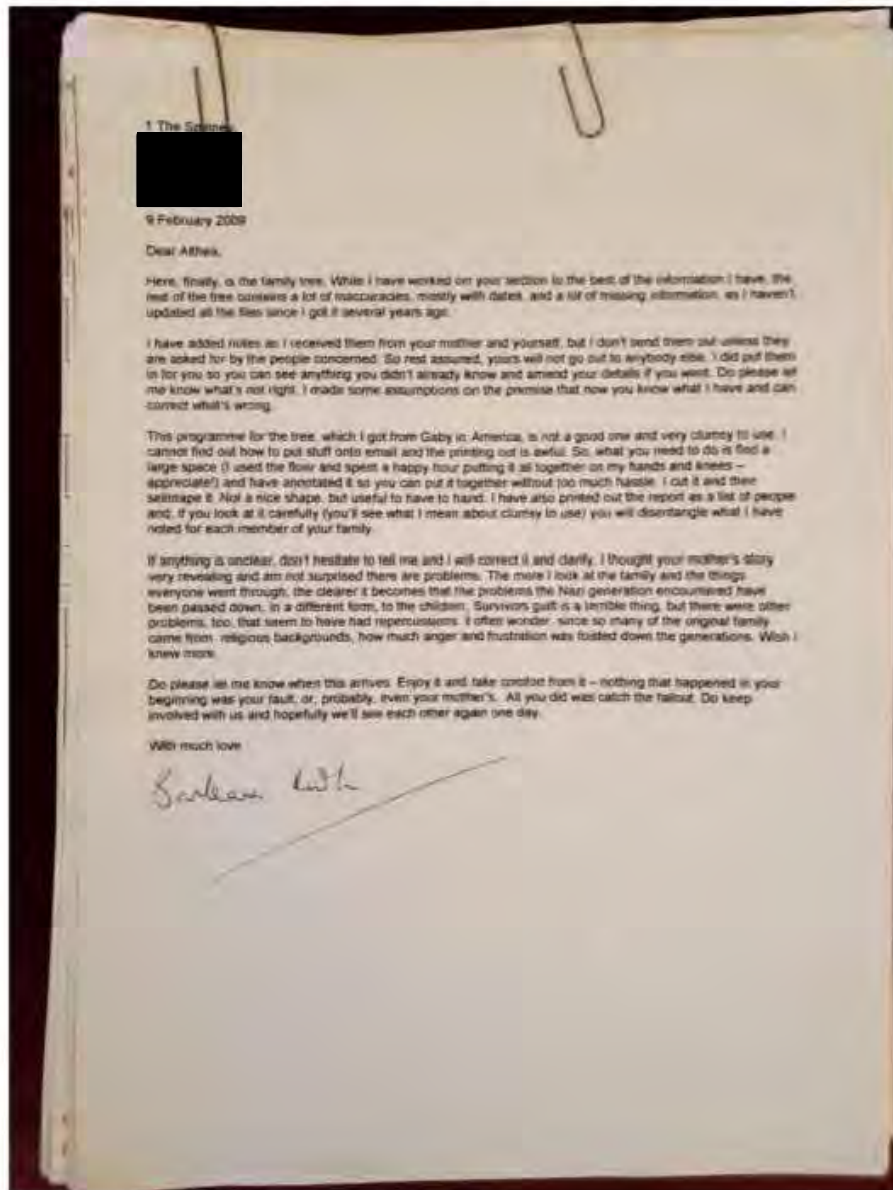
They ~~always~~! get top game and more
and more.

Being mean is when you mean to hurt someone on purpose. They call names or get on
by jumping in front of me
when I am mad and yell in his [redacted] and
other things.

I took my then 5 ½ year old son to the photoshoot for this *In Pittsburgh* newsweekly cover. Wes Morar beautifully directed and shot these gentlemen's photos. The last I heard, these two incredible Souls, one survivor + one liberator, remained friends long after this photo shoot. Both now passed over, my prayer is that they share tea at least once a week in Heaven, served to them on a golden, sparkling tray that reflects back to them their own beauty.

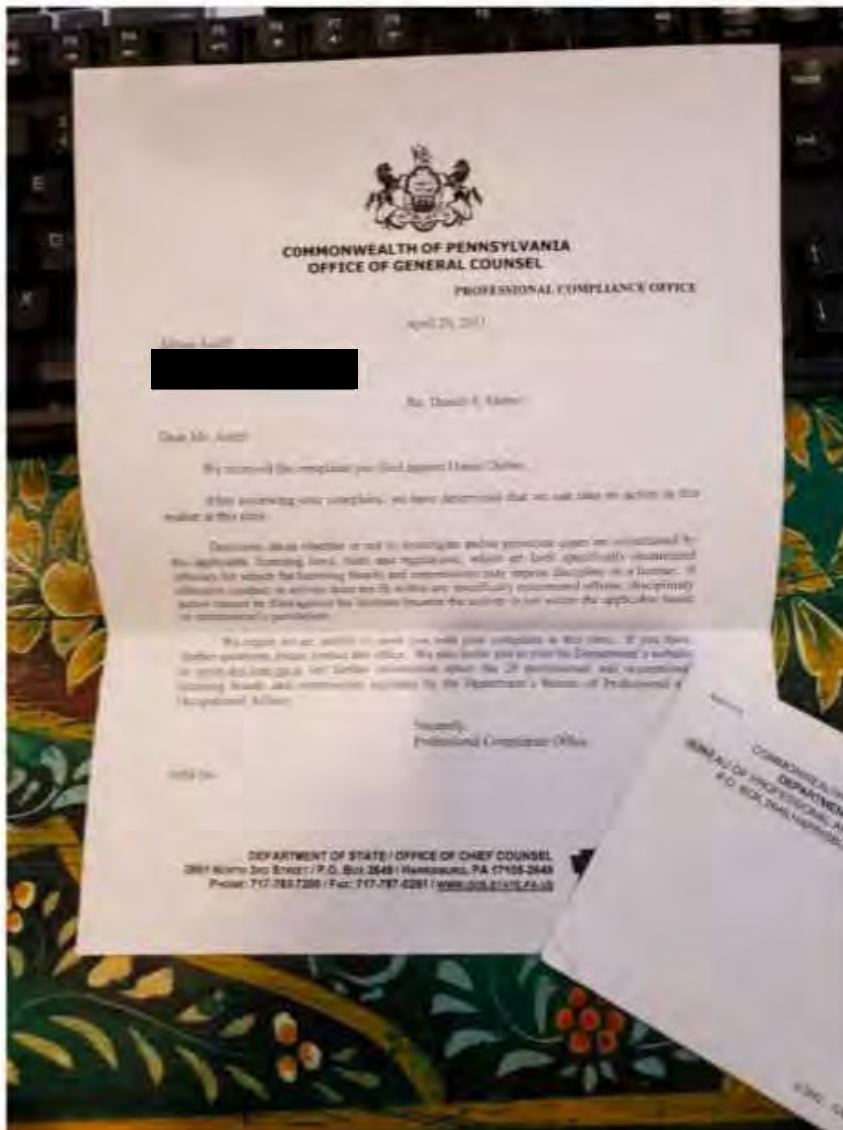


A lovely British woman, Barbara Ruth (surname purposely withheld), wrote to me two years following the reunion in New York City mentioned on Page 64. She sent the letter clipped to the maternal-side family tree, which outlined who perished in which Nazi camps (as best known) and who survived and multiplied. Note the paragraph that begins with, "If anything is unclear . . ."



(B) Stray bits of documentation re: my criminally intended "fathers"

With the support of my, at that time, actual Ph.D. therapist in Seattle, I tried to turn Dan in for being a fraudulent Ph.D. poser psychotherapist in Philadelphia. I was genuinely concerned that there would be suicides under his so-called care. My therapist, having read what Dan published online (and removed only after the report was made, after first changing his profession to "retired" psychotherapist) was shocked by Dan's assertions at being a licensed psychotherapist, at all, let alone a Ph.D. and the extent to which (he had been quite prolific) he self-published his "scholarly" papers, comments to "other" professionals in his purported field, and opinions.



And just one of his many online comments as an expert (of course, fake) Ph.D.:

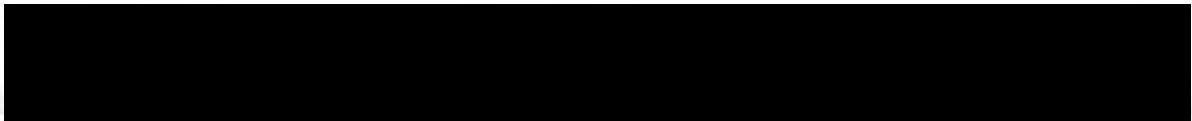


And the death certificate that, in perpetuity, records his absolute lies as primary evidence of "fact." The last of his many wives knew nothing about her husband, including his parents' names, his actual lack of education, his actual profession(s), and his actual medical history.



He was not a Ph.D., not a psychotherapist, and never suffered from Parkinson's. Even my own con artist son remarked (upon secretly meeting with Dan and telling me at least a year after the fact in a nasty rant) that, when he turned his head, Dan completely stopped shaking, only to resume when [REDACTED] again turned towards him. From that time, we referred to it as Dan's "fake Parkinson's."

[EDITOR: PLEASE CROP OUT FINGER, AS IT IS NOT MINE]



[illegible]

(C) Documentation of forged receipts in my name or, alternatively, Trudi conducting money laundering schemes through my old bank accounts and forged educational plus loans

Below is pictured a sampling of checks that Trudi, the adoptomère, wrote to herself from my bank account to keep her lifestyle going once I left their house. All through childhood, I remember what I would refer to as the "Statue of Liberty checks" that she would cash through my bank account and for which I would receive just the lollipop the teller gave me. These Statue of Liberty checks were from the government, based on my ongoing abuse that masquerading as various childhood disabilities.

By keeping me abused, medically and otherwise, the Social Security disability checks kept coming. When I graduated high school, as well as when I got knocked up and then married, Trudi panicked and would binge shop or sign educational plus loans (thousands at a time – you'll see her drawing out increments of \$1,000 and \$2,000 below, while the smaller checks are drawing out the disability money) on me and then pocket the proceeds to fund the lifestyle to which she had become accustomed. It would take me years to pay off her debts.



As well, the Azeff's, having been so accustomed to the money I brought in from them – through Social Security disability fraud, holding jobs as a Hebrew tutor, Sunday school teacher, folding clothes at The Limited retail shop in the Plymouth Meeting Mall, babysitting since the age of 7, and being a paid-for child sex worker – later declared Bankruptcy not being able to downward adjust for the loss of income their adopted daughter brought to them, never by choice, for years. And I was an unwilling participant in fraud (i.e. a co-conspirator) against the U.S. government.

That last point remains the most difficult for me to stomach.

After shopping at *Flossie's Bags & Bangles* in Lafayette Hill, Trudi also shopped at *The Shoe Bar*, where she enjoyed purchasing items she couldn't afford. So she charged them to her adopted daughter, still in the hospital from a four-day labor and what would be a week additional of intravenous antibiotics. I didn't have the money for shoes, food, diapers, or other essentials, but I'd spend years paying off her and her husband's debts. This same week, she also charged up hotel rooms, gasoline, restaurants, and other sundry spends.

And although my name was by then [REDACTED] with no middle initial, the credit card companies took no action, as well when I told them I was in the hospital on the other side of the state from where these transactions were made (and my signature was forged). The police also took no action, assuring me that parents never stole from children, it was always the other way around. Little did they know.

And evidence of the education plus loans that funded her shopping habit and that I had not learned about until they defaulted and that took me decades to repay. Despite being unaware of these 11.5%+ interest rate loans, all told, of around \$18,500+ (due to finding out well after the fact, owed interest compounded), Trudi forged my signature on each. And she got away with it. All the while, I was literally scrimping for change to eat, pay bills, and sustain us. Note that I don't even have a middle initial, legally or otherwise. While she had given me "Lynne" as the middle name at adoption (aged 3 to 4), I had it legally removed soon after I left Shasta Road, not wanting any part of her.



(D) Naked cards from the 1970's with which I was forced, as a girl, to play strip poker (and note that I was born in 1969)

Often used as foreplay with Dorito's, cookies, and lube, these playing cards speak for themselves and are specifically referenced on pages 59 and 244:



(E) Documentation about the real story behind [REDACTED]

After wrestling with the difficult information [REDACTED]'s girlfriend shared with me in the Summer of 2020, supplementing earlier learned details (both observed and as told to me directly), I wrote and sent to opposing counsel the following document. While it is generally unprecedented to send such documentation to the party being sued in litigation, I felt morally and ethically obligated to do so. As follows. Leading into the copy/paste of my original document, I also add here a link²⁴ to [REDACTED]'s amended pleadings against this Ph.D. female scientist, which must be read to understand to what I was specifically responding, per numbered paragraph:

Note, too, that at the time of its writing (August 2020), I had not intended it would ever be made public. I felt compelled to help another of [REDACTED]'s targeted victims. I never proofread nor cleaned up the writing in any way and, as such, you'll find a few typos or the like. As well, although I very much tried to conceal his girlfriend's name, I once mentioned her first name, about which I remain sad and sorry to this day. She had gone through enough already, and I would never intend to "out" her without her prior consent.

Lastly, while I marked the document and the email to which it was attached as confidential, I noted online in late January 2020 (some four months after I emailed it to [REDACTED]'s counsel) that it was somehow referred to twice online. In one instance, the link was removed. In the other, one could read a headline but not see the document itself. At around that time, too, it became clear that my name was no longer associated (as it had been for at least 10 years prior) with my son's. With his usual *modus operandi* at play, he manipulated SEO and SEM as best suited his needs. For years, the fact that I was his mother proved harmful to me professionally, might I add, but at least it was factual that I was and am the mother of [REDACTED], of [REDACTED], and other random online aliases, as detailed below.

[REDACTED] has been and remains excellent at silencing the truth-tellers around him. He has bullied journalists, news agencies, and others.

Lastly, it was only well after I sent this document (on 31 August 2021) to [REDACTED] counsel that I learned that [REDACTED] had already sued – and received, as reported, "substantial damages" (money) from a website he not only had caused the end of but forced to apologize online for what was actually accurate reporting, and that he still chose to not pay the mortgage, despite this influx of cash. He still, too, borrowed considerable additional sums from his girlfriend, pretending to be broke as she labored hard and consistently for years. My back of the envelope calculation has me believing he owes her some \$35K to \$45K in total, at least.

Confidential statement in response to reading the amended pleadings from plaintiff in

²⁴ EDITOR: MUST ADD LINK OR EMBED THE PDF DOC HERE TO LAUNCH (OF HIS AMENDED PLEADINGS)

Initial communication: I reached out to [REDACTED] by phone on Friday, August 7, 2020 and, following, her attorney, [REDACTED] regarding litigation against [REDACTED] by my son, [REDACTED]. I recognize how unprecedented it must have seemed to reach out to the party my son sued. I could not locate the name of the firm nor specific counsel representing the scientist-defendant in this matter and, after a great deal of Internet research, located a phone number for [REDACTED]. Following a brief conversation, I contacted her counsel.

Lead in: Following a long period (for years now) of extreme discomfort about the fake origin story [REDACTED], in general, and this litigation, in particular, I felt compelled to come forward. My son has been manipulating the media for approximately half of his lifespan thus far, having honed his skills with SEO, SEM, and self-promotion over many years with numerous endeavors (please see content that follows).

I unequivocally discouraged [REDACTED] numerous times from filing suit against [REDACTED]. My son became irate with me each time I did not support his obsessive desire to initiate litigation.

My reasons for not believing it was appropriate for [REDACTED] to sue include, among other things:

- The backstory [REDACTED] is completely fabricated;
- [REDACTED] demonstrated to me a long pattern of hatred against women (a direct factor in this case);
- [REDACTED] demonstrated to me a long pattern of anti-Semitism (a direct factor in this case);
- [REDACTED] demonstrated to me an established pattern of lying to and manipulating females for money (arguably, a contributing factor in this case);
- [REDACTED] has a history of being what I call 'litigation happy' (upon request, I can explain how I feel this, too, is a relevant factor in this case); and
- [REDACTED] is emotionally and mentally disturbed and extremely unstable and, as such, I saw this act (of filing suit) as part of a long-term pattern of doing whatever he can to make easy money and to gain further notoriety.

Not unrelated, the timing of the filing of this particular suit coincides with when [REDACTED] was obsessively seeking a \$60,000 cash infusion to purchase a property adjacent to the home he holds with his girlfriend.

Current state of communication with my son: [REDACTED] stopped speaking to me towards the end of November 2019, upon realizing that his live-in girlfriend had contacted me directly for help when, after screaming at her and blaming her for having a spontaneous miscarriage, he had left her bleeding it out alone in their [REDACTED] home. She reached me by phone crying, not knowing what to do.

Because there is a large chasm between the image [REDACTED] portrays in the media and who he really is, and perhaps buffered by various mental health diagnoses and long-held patterns of extremely disturbing behavior, I've become aware that [REDACTED] has a particular weakness around anyone knowing the truth about who he actually is. Pertaining to his utterly inappropriate words and behavior around the miscarriage, he knew that I would want to discuss the incident with him.

But [REDACTED] cares neither for truth nor accountability.

As such, I've not heard from him.²⁵ Additionally, I believe the filing of the lawsuit against [REDACTED] played heavily into his shift from viewing me as a confidant to someone he could no longer turn to for, among other

²⁵ Evidently, [REDACTED] more recently concocted a story that he shared with his girlfriend and, separately, his father that he stopped talking to me because I shared with him for the first time (when he was nearing the age of 30, and upon him telling me how much he wanted a baby and was pressuring his girlfriend) that I had not

things, narcissistic toxic dumps, furious rantings, obsessive thoughts, and fantasy-based thinking. I did not support the suit and did not want to hear his endless, rage-filled diatribes against [REDACTED]

Why I felt compelled to come forward, at long last [REDACTED] long-time live-in girlfriend, with whom he holds an evidently non-traditional mortgage for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] reached out to me by text and then by phone on July 18, 2020. She had evidently moved out of their home that day. In our discussions, I learned that [REDACTED] had not once paid a dime towards their monthly mortgage payments in the entire 2 ½ years they had held a mortgage together. [REDACTED] had been pressuring her to have a baby, too, and she described that she felt overwhelmed and just needed to escape. She was not sure, at that time, whether she would be able to leave for just a few days or permanently.

I had asked [REDACTED] over and over if he was paying at least half of their mortgage, based on my personal knowledge of his ability to take advantage, financially and otherwise, of another young woman (I provide her name later in this document and offer the background of her father pulling her out of school, and out of Pittsburgh, to get her away from [REDACTED], following his manipulating at least \$6K or \$7K and possibly up to around \$10K from her) and a long-term pattern of not supporting himself.

Adding to this news, [REDACTED] also had his girlfriend borrow five digits from her 401(K) to finance, among other things, additional property (see above, and I believe he was determined to get that money from any female he could) he hoped to purchase, as well as a five-digit personal loan to do so. Unrelated to the purchase of additional property, he had also very recently asked her for a sudden, unexplained \$7,000 to help him cover undisclosed "miscellaneous" expenses. On her salary alone (of approximately \$55,000), she had been shouldering their lifestyle, most recently, she explained, needing to draw additional moneys monthly from her retirement account just to make the couple's mortgage payment, which had crept higher a couple of months earlier (from around \$2,100 to \$2,400 per month, assumedly based on increased property taxes or the like). The purchase of the additional property had not been made, ultimately, and a good deal of the borrowed money was returned to pay back the personal loan, as well as her 401(K). She believes that by living with her parents and no longer paying the mortgage, her 401(K) will be restored by the end of 2020.

To be clear, I believe that [REDACTED] filing of suit against [REDACTED] was timed to his constant need for easy money gained from other people's hard labor, his desire to purchase specific property, his constant need for attention by and in the media, his persistent misogyny, his love of joining and/or causing to initiate legal action (there is specific information I can provide on this point, from [REDACTED] to at least two of his

consented the night he was made and that he should allow her to come to her own mind on the matter. He continued to call me, however, as usual up to the day his girlfriend called me about the miscarriage. In fact, I was the first person the two told about the pregnancy. [REDACTED] was calling me regularly about the pregnancy (and desire for homeschooling his eventual four children with Christian values, as he fantasized, about his girlfriend's diet, and other points) in an ongoing manner. The sudden silence occurred once he knew I knew that he had blamed her for the miscarriage, screamed at her, and left her to bleed. Then, after he returned to their home that night and when her parents arrived (at my behest), he would not let his girlfriend leave with them to care for her health and well-being. In her words, "I know how this must sound, Althea, but it's all about him. I am having a miscarriage, but it's always all [REDACTED]"

²⁶ In fact, in a strange turn from usual events, [REDACTED] did not and has not cashed a birthday check I sent to him. I offered to fly to Pittsburgh to spend his [REDACTED] together, but he kept declining that offer each of the many times I extended it. He knew how adamantly opposed I was to him filing suit against [REDACTED]. I now believe that he started to distance himself, at least around money and the topic of [REDACTED], in late summer, September, and into October, when he must have known for certain he was going to sue her. That said, he kept calling until the miscarriage (just avoiding the topic of [REDACTED])

[REDACTED]

girlfriend's former landlords to another inquiry he had his girlfriend initiate) and, later, when I learned that a mental health professional was spearheading a six-digit fundraising account to pay for [REDACTED] litigation, such detail further fueled my beliefs above.

The straw that broke the camel's back, so to speak, was learning that his girlfriend moved out of the home and had been taken advantage of financially for the entire period they lived in that home together.²⁷ It struck me that my shame-filled silence could be contributing to another's pain and to [REDACTED] unchecked manipulation of and profit from women.

While [REDACTED] father has admitted to me during the few conversations we have had that [REDACTED] is a pathological liar, mentally disturbed, bad for his girlfriend, a tyrant, manipulative, and a "dick," as he refers to him (to the extent, too, that he joked with me about how we should brainstorm ways to have him medically castrated so his poor girlfriend would not have to raise children while taking full care of him, too, and this was before the pregnancy, when I called his father in tears about the new set of lies in the CNN program), he has never and will never draw a line for [REDACTED] around his behavior or character. In short, his father is an enabler and, even after discovering that [REDACTED] had not paid the mortgage once, and even after admitting his son "completely lacks empathy" around the miscarriage, he will not counsel him on proper behavior and how not to be a conman. He laughs uncomfortably about all of the [REDACTED] lies, wondering aloud how [REDACTED] seemingly mastered the art of getting the media to believe anything he has to say. He has rewarded him, in fact, for prior bad acts (not related to [REDACTED]), details about which I can provide upon request and if determined to be legally relevant.

It is my contention that so long as [REDACTED] receives his father's tacit approval and enablement, the media's attention, and now the six-digit funding of this frivolous lawsuit, [REDACTED] will go deeper and deeper into his disturbing fantasy life, hurting as many women as it takes to fund his lifestyle, one woman at a time. I contend that [REDACTED] is one of those women.

Following is only my personal commentary on specific stipulations as signed and attested to by plaintiff [REDACTED], in his pleadings:

9. Strongly refute/deny. There is easily discoverable evidence of [REDACTED] being engaged in many other time-sucking and "out-of-control" activities and habits that "took over his life" (profit making, in fact, albeit while tax evading much of that time) from approximately that age through incorporation of [REDACTED]

His back story [REDACTED] is comprised of lies.

13. Strongly refute/deny. [REDACTED] simply does not have the history with pornography from childhood as purported. In reality, he went from highly time-consuming obsession to highly time-consuming obsession, including but not limited to: (1) setting up a store and then selling fake Louis Vuitton bags on eBay, (2) running an illegal botting endeavor against Activision Blizzard's World of Warcraft (when he was known as [REDACTED] which was very well documented and remains discoverable) – in each of these two endeavors, he was a willful tax evader – (3) importing an at that time illegal in the US substance that he injected in his

²⁷ This girlfriend has been controlled (I can provide details upon request) by my son for years (they dated for two different periods of time, the second far longer than the former, and have cohabitated, including before the house purchase, for a long time). She shared with me on August 16, 2020 that "My 65-year old parents let me do more and go out more than [REDACTED] did."



stomach through needles to encourage tanning his skin, rather than burning, and (4) creating SEO and SEM around how “famous” he was as [REDACTED] to the extent that, while he was an “extra” in the background of the [REDACTED].

[REDACTED], [REDACTED] actually left college one Fall, throwing away the tuition paid that semester, because he was “the best looking person anyone had ever seen and . . . would be the biggest star . . . making over \$1M by the end” of that calendar year. He had shared plans to hire a private acting coach. Ultimately, despite the media hype he created around himself, [REDACTED] was not shown in [REDACTED] as an extra or as anything else. He was able to garner other attention around that endeavor, [REDACTED].

This delusional period, among many others that were also perhaps²⁸ fueled by mania (bipolar I), was not short lasting. [REDACTED] cut his teeth, so to speak, on creating fantasy and attention around himself for years, preparing him to master Internet search and news media manipulation for what would fuel [REDACTED]. There were other obsessions that took up his time, as well, from achieving in school, work, or life. He also has suffered from long-term sleep issues (he chooses to stay up until the middle of the morning and sleep through most of the day, during which he obsesses over his thing-du-jour, so to speak, ranging from anything such as imagined/psychosomatic health issues to the Tim Ferriss 4-hour workweek concept to soylent to creating a cult to whatever else captures his fancy – in the [REDACTED] years, he regularly stayed up all night for many nights at a stretch; in the Hollywood star fantasy years, same, and so on and so on).

²⁸ Although having a long-reaching mental health background, [REDACTED] received no therapy or treatment for many, many years. Despite the antics he engaged in through college, however, [REDACTED] only sought out, upon graduation, diagnoses that would translate into him never have to work, as he described it to me. It was yet another scheme. At [REDACTED] years of age at that point, he and I were sitting on a park bench where he described in great detail how, unlike me, he would not be “trash” who would have to work for a living and that he could easily obtain the kinds of mental health diagnoses that would mean he could, in his mind, “collect disability” for the rest of his life. Because, as he described, he was so talented, intelligent, and good looking, he would not endure what I had in terms of working (he described the differences between us, being the opposite of what he saw in himself). He felt his respective biological families’ medical backgrounds (addictions, on one side; mental health, the other) would prove beyond doubt he would never have to work, too. I told him, among other things, that under no uncertain terms was that an acceptable plan. Later that summer and after obtaining his diagnoses, and because he believed himself to be very “special” and “unique,” as he told me, he demanded \$4K from me to obtain further tests (that is, those that would not be covered by insurance). I declined. I believe he wore his father down, who paid for them (and had and still has a long history of enabling [REDACTED]) and he, [REDACTED] shared the diagnoses listed above with me. He confirmed the more expensive, out-of-insurance tests revealed: bipolar 1, borderline personality spectrum and disassociation, schizoid, having no work ethic, anxiety when a task is new or hard, and some other details. I maintain contemporaneous notes of that conversation, as well as the earlier psychiatric diagnoses. [REDACTED] was put on a mood stabilizer, Lamictol, to which he claimed to be allergic and removed himself from it within a month. He was supposed to have needed to attend an intensive outpatient clinic at Western Psych on a daily basis, as well, which he never did. He never even went to therapy. [REDACTED] said he’d spend his life in bed surfing online, having his father continue to pay his way through life until he could get the disability money, to which he thought he was entitled. Miraculously, when he got a temp job [REDACTED], he said that he was completely well. Now his being very special and unique turned to complaining how boring the work at the onsite employer was and how much smarter he was than [REDACTED] own employee software engineers although, he admitted, they were smart, overall. He continued to work [REDACTED], refining and embellishing the back story, until he felt he could engage in that activity full-time.

Rather than suffering any negative effects, ██████ building of ██████ on lies and untruths has brought him great rewards, as a self-described and purportedly professionally diagnosed manic bipolar I with cluster B personality disorder traits and a fondness for, in no particular order: media manipulation, money, fame, and control, and he has been living high on the attention and money (which went unreported and then underreported in the first years, which he often flaunted and bragged to me about) he craved for many, many years. His narcissistic tendencies, too, are fueled by the media attention he created around himself.

Like his biological grandfather before him, who purported to be a Ph.D. psychotherapist but who had never finished one semester of community college, ██████ is an all-out confidence man (known more colloquially as a conman).²⁹

But with very little research, one can easily trace the trajectory from scheme to scheme with deepening SEO and SEM skills from year to year – from the eBay store to the World of Warcraft botting days, and to the ██████ ██████ ██████ ██████ backstory can be easily refuted by tracing his all-encompassing, time-consuming online schemes over the years.

15. Strongly deny validity and efficacy of “reporting,” including, among other things, adequacy of research conducted by named news coverage outlets. As just one example related to this stipulation, upon publication of ██████ ██████ ██████ ██████, I personally contacted the reporter who informed me that ██████ had threatened him aggressively against contacting me or his father, that is, those who could support or deny his claims about his childhood, by, as the reporter described: threatening to sue the reporter, forcing him to sign an NDA, and otherwise behaving in a belligerent and controlling manner with that reporter.

The reporter also shared that rather than conducting basic fact checking, as well, he merely relied on past coverage ██████ had garnered for himself. When I questioned ██████ about why the media did not contact me, he claimed that he wanted to protect family members, a lie he has used since the earliest media mentions.

This particular reporter was interested in one thing, namely, when I mentioned that I had narrowly escaped being killed by ██████ in my garage a few months earlier (see later in this document). He wanted to learn more about that potential story, but I declined (again, please see later in this document).

I contend that if ██████ bullied a reporter working on behalf of ██████, the same is no doubt true for other, if not all, news outlets.

16. Overall same commentary as above. In the case of the ██████ ██████ coverage, and as the years go by (that is, over time), ██████'s lies are recast and grow deeper and more twisted still. I contacted ██████ twice, however, this outlet never replied to my emails.

17, 18, 19, and 20. It appears that in this day and age, people will believe anything. ██████ has a long history of manipulating search engine results and the media and, let's face it, sex sells.

36. Strongly refute/deny. I consider ██████ to be a full-fledged, long practicing misogynist. I will provide examples upon request that support this belief. He has a history of engaging in toxic narcissistic abuse patterns with the only two official girlfriends (i.e. not his random sex partners) he has had and has long been

²⁹ For years, ██████ has hero worshipped Frank Abignale/*Catch Me If You Can*. He seemed impressed, too, that his con artist biological grandfather got “Ph.D.” on to his own death certificate, having fully duped his last spouse who, fascinatingly, is a mental health practitioner.

misogynistic towards me, his stepmother, and certainly in his rants about [REDACTED], as just several examples. The earlier girlfriend's father removed her from the city in which [REDACTED] lived to get her away from his control and chicanery, while the later girlfriend's father attempted to do so but failed. That said, at the time of this writing, that girlfriend is now living in her parents' home.

37. Strongly refute/deny. As a woman who could have died by my own son's hand on at least three occasions (twice because I put myself between the gun being held through a bag and crowds of other people, and once during an all-out rage-filled diatribe about what he felt entitled to and that I was not providing to him), I strongly refute/deny that [REDACTED] has any issue with violence against women. I consider his practice of always carrying a firearm, speaking in threatening and/or deranged tones, and causing me to fear for my life as factors when, taken apart or together, are quantifiable as violence. The definition of "promoted," however, would need to be understood in its fullest sense (i.e. not limited to publishing or uttering in public) to include experiences I have personally been through, including the closest I have even been to having been shot/killed by [REDACTED] (see above), my own and only child, in my garage in the Spring of 2016. Note that even with severe mental illness and personality disorders, each believed to be diagnosed but untreated due to [REDACTED] non-compliance, [REDACTED] is the owner of an entire *arsenal* of firearms, including four guns and one semi-automatic weapon.

As of August 9, 2020, I learned that [REDACTED] took away his girlfriend's legally registered gun (her sole firearm) in November of 2019 and claims he does not know where it is, to this day. I do not in any way believe he cannot find that firearm. On August 16, 2020, I encouraged his girlfriend during our phone conversation to report that firearm as missing so, at the very least, she would be protected in the event an incident would ever be carried out with that gun. She had shared with me the week before, again by phone, that on at least one occasion, [REDACTED] left one of his (unlocked) guns "outside overnight, on the steps" for anyone to have found. As of today, I have no reason to believe she has reported her gun missing. She agreed she should report it but then referred to knowing that doing such would make [REDACTED] upset. To put it mildly, [REDACTED] is an irresponsible gun owner. Note that, fascinatingly, [REDACTED] did not lose track of the physical whereabouts of the at least five firearms that comprise his personal arsenal but deprived his girlfriend of her one firearm since November 2019 while claiming to have lost it.

I contend that [REDACTED] is a danger to others, in general and, in particular, to females and/or those of other gender identities he does not approve (I can furnish two examples of what I mean by this last phrase re: "other gender identities"). Note that I have not allowed him to be alone with me in any non-public space since the Spring of 2016, for my own protection.

I absolutely consider [REDACTED] to be capable of violence against women. He is the greatest danger to those who know the real him, as well as his longstanding motives to manipulate and con women, in particular, along with the masses through the media.

I, as that person, stand at the greatest risk of being the female target of his well-armed wrath. By reaching out to [REDACTED], her counsel, and now with this written statement, I understand the risk I am placing myself in terms of becoming [REDACTED]'s target for Internet and other bullying, litigation, and for bullets through my body. He has been verbally vicious with me on countless occasions in the past, without provocation, as well as put my life in direct harm on that Spring 2016 day in my garage, and I fully believe he is capable of committing any sinister, manipulative, or otherwise dark act it takes to keep his narcissistic supply of money, media attention, and fame alive and well.

With these risks in mind, I still step forward. No matter how dark [REDACTED] has become, I feel compelled to shine light where none has heretofore been allowed.

38. Strongly refute/deny. Again, with respect to the legal definition of "promoted" and as pertains to this case, I can only attest to the fact that I believe my adult son is as strong an anti-Semite as can be found. Examples can be furnished upon request.

In fact, when the shooting in Pittsburgh occurred and as stipulated in his pleadings, my first instinct was to ascertain whether my son was the gunman.

51. While I do not have first-hand knowledge if my adult son has ever threatened to rape someone, he had relayed to me a story in which, while having sex with an unnamed drunk woman in Tel Aviv while the two were in the shower, she fell backwards on her head, causing her, in his description, to bleed profusely from her head. Then he just laughed. When I asked whether she had made a full recovery, he laughed again and said he would have no idea, that he didn't think he could even remember her name. At the very least, this vignette displays disregard for that particular female sex partner.

61. A [REDACTED] spoke specifically about this "bitch" and what I'll refer to in this document as the "c" word causing him problems, in general, and then with his intended taping of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] often entertained extreme fixations, obsessions and, at times, what sounded like delusions about many things. He spoke to me for numerous hours about how much he "hate(d) that bitch," referring to [REDACTED], and how he would have to equip himself with 24/7 personal security surveillance gear while in California to film [REDACTED]. He has wished ill against her during conversations with me, numerous times, well before the filming of that show, and he always sounded to be in a very agitated state while doing so.

[REDACTED] shared with me that he always carries a firearm, in general, as well as while traveling (checked when by air) and, taking into account that [REDACTED] told me that he spent a great deal of money on some sort of physical surveillance for his body 24/7 and that he was 100% certain he would interact with [REDACTED] while in California, I was seriously concerned about what he might do during that trip. It also made me wonder in what other ways and other times he would put such body surveillance equipment to use.

He was consistently intent on "taking her down" but was always also obsessed about the "big money" from "the porn industry" that he contended supported her every move, including but not limited to having, as he described it, two full-time publicists. He was upset that he did not have "a fancy publicist" and endless money, but it's clear he was able to find the endless money for this lawsuit through what I discovered several months later, a Seattle-based therapist who created a funding page to finance what I contend is this needless and unwarranted litigation. Notably, he also was able to keep any and all [REDACTED] money earned for himself, not contributing to his own mortgage payment and choosing, instead, to put that burden fully on his girlfriend, who also catered to him full-time by maintaining the cooking, cleaning, upkeep, repairs, and other tasks associated with the property and day-to-day living.³⁰ If his girlfriend went on a work trip, he would not eat unless she prepared and sorted meals for him ahead of time. He would not bathe. He barely slept. He had

³⁰ The girlfriend shared with me this summer that [REDACTED] would have her handle chores and home repairs, as such activities were suitable for her but not for him, intimating how much higher value he was than her. With me, he would be very direct about how he saw me but, evidently, with her, she said he revealed these beliefs from time to time and in a more subtle manner (once in front of a handyman, who intervened on her behalf). Where he would call me trash, white trash, dirty Jew, a lower value person, etc. he would refer to her, evidently, as not as smart, talented, important, famous, etc. as himself, thereby she should handle the less desirable aspects of his life.

her believe and tried to demonstrate that he was incapable of handling the basic tasks associated with daily living for his person or for their home.

67. Strongly refute/deny. Other than in the intricate web of his fabrications for purposes of material gain, I in no way see how [REDACTED] has been harmed, financially or otherwise. In fact, this lawsuit has aided his overall and ongoing, long-term rather robust self-generated PR campaign and, it appears, financially (through the funding site).³¹ I would argue that being enriched thus far by in excess of \$146K is the opposite of being harmed, as well as by the additional PR and coverage around this suit.

85. I contend that [REDACTED] maintains extremist values and has supported, in conversations with me, violence against women. He refers to me as a "libtard" (after he suddenly switched from supporting Rand Paul, then to being a Bernie, including actively working on his campaign, to becoming a Trump supporter) and a "dirty Jew," "cheap Jew," or "old bitch," among many other derogatory terms, and has often shared his strong desire to become a "cult leader," with many minions whom he fantasized about housing and controlling. He has used the same terms (around being old, ugly, and a bitch) about Hillary Clinton as he did for [REDACTED] as well as for me, all in what I consider to be the thinnest of veils to conceal his underlying and pervasive misogyny. [REDACTED] often fantasized about being a cult leader, among other things.

Many reasonable people feel that cults are extremist. Many reasonable people feel that unchecked rage is extremist. Many reasonable people feel that the need to isolate his girlfriend was extremist. In fact, while the property he and his girlfriend purchased was quite large (i.e. it was originally a hotel), he fantasized and sent me pictures obtained from Zillow of "the perfect compound for my cult," away from neighbors, prying eyes, and others. He reminded me, too, from time to time, that the Internet would already know that I was a Jew and, when it was time to "round you up again," I should be fearful. He wondered aloud about himself, too, in those conversations. My first full-time role after college was as a staff reporter for *The Jewish Chronicle*, as well I had taught part-time in a synagogue. While his father is not Jewish and was an atheist when we met (evidently later becoming Catholic), [REDACTED] attended Catholic high school (after a rather ugly anti-Semitic campaign with his father to fight in court together against me, a mother who fully believed in the value of public schools as an important equalizer in a healthy democracy), and that he now sees, according to his girlfriend, a "Christian counselor" online (note, too, that he has indicated to me on numerous occasions that he wants to raise his future children with homeschooling based on Christianity and its wholesome values and,

³¹ Please see [REDACTED] -- where, as of today, in excess of \$146K has already been raised.

[REDACTED] is a long-time conman. When I first saw this site, I reached out to the therapist on the video, who spoke to me briefly but with discomfort and some derision. It sickened me to see not only this site but the audacity of his shift in the past year to pretending to be a super Jew, and to caring about the shooting in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] has often taken what I'll call kindness nuggets he learned from me and used them to appear more virtuous. As one example, when someone he interacted with online died in a house fire, I told him to use his finely tuned money raising and Internet skills for good to raise money for this person's funeral to take the burden off his family. He thanked me and ran with the idea, saying it would make him "look really good on the Internet." More recently, and from what I just only heard from his girlfriend, [REDACTED] is now claiming he was sexually abused as a child when, in reality, that was my background, not his. He knew nothing of my background or life until I told him when he was 23, in that same conversation referenced earlier, and he evidently uses that, too, to excuse away his ill treatment towards this girlfriend and his lack of intimacy the second time they were together (after their first break up, she dated others and was engaged when he came back and pressured her to leave the fiancée for him). He now claims, evidently, that he also has "inherited trauma," not only from my background (of which he only knows a limited amount) but because two of my biological grandparents fled Germany. I don't have words for how sick and depraved [REDACTED] is, period. Whereas he used to brag about having been "coddled" throughout his childhood and into his early adulthood, he's now evidently claiming abuse as an excuse for mistreating his girlfriend.

when he cheated on his girlfriend and was going to run off and marry his paramour in the summer of 2019, extolled the virtues of her "good Christian values" and her "not being a whore like" the girlfriend he actually lived with and, later as I learned it, lived off of). He often (as his girlfriend first shared with me by phone in January 2018) judged his live-in girlfriend for being impure, not worthy of marrying, not virtuous, and other judgments that displayed what could only be described as extremist values and, quite frankly, extremely gender-based (i.e. misogynistic). While she was fully and long-term supporting him, fascinatingly, he would proclaim his fear around her taking all of his money should they ever marry and then divorce, which he used as further justification not to marry her.

I could go on and on in terms of describing more extremist values, as well, around race, sex, firearms, cults, slaves/minions, politics, social orders, and other areas, but I think the message here is clear. He considers his assistant, Matthew, to be the first of his minions and a model for future ranks of such.

90. Loss of capital? Really? As of Aug. 1, 2020, he had not once made a mortgage payment for the 2 ½ years he has been a mortgage holder. He does not support himself, rather, he has been supported by his well-employed girlfriend.³²

Around June 2019, [REDACTED] broke off relations with a purported business partner [REDACTED] so, as [REDACTED] described to me, he could earn the money "he was taking" from him. Continuing to string his girlfriend along (and, of course, what he reported to me), he claimed that he would be making "even bigger money." He promised his girlfriend he would create programs to finally earn money (as she, not I, was in the know that he was not earning/not paying their mortgage) and then, in the short span of two weeks, was able to both create and launch the groups (described, by her, as support groups with [REDACTED] serving as the facilitator), hence creating an income stream.

97. Really? Shame? Humiliation? A person who willingly and with great effort created a fake back story around masturbation is suddenly shamed and humiliated? A man who willingly and with great effort adds to that fabricated back story each year to the detriment of reality can feel shame? A man who lives off the work of his long-term, loyal, industrious girlfriend suddenly feels shame and humiliation? A man who controls women, judges them through a misogynistic lens, bullies them, etc, is going to now feel shame and humiliation? A man who is a tyrant with others, including reporters? Filing fake stipulations within his pleadings against a neuroscientist is not shameful? In terms of mental suffering, [REDACTED] consistently creates his own mental suffering. He is always fixated on something that he points to causing him to not sleep, for instance, and that consumes his every waking thought. When spending time with me, he would not engage in what reasonable people would consider regular conversation. Everything was self-obsessed, absorbed, and often extremely disturbed. In fact, that has been happening since early childhood, when a psychiatrist (M.D.) shared with [REDACTED]'s father that people like this aren't made, they are born this way.

Leads to follow include but are not limited to:

The named reporter who, if having any trouble remembering his conversation with me, I could weigh in to refresh his memory of such. To cover his own tracks of performing shoddy reporting, he had no interest in

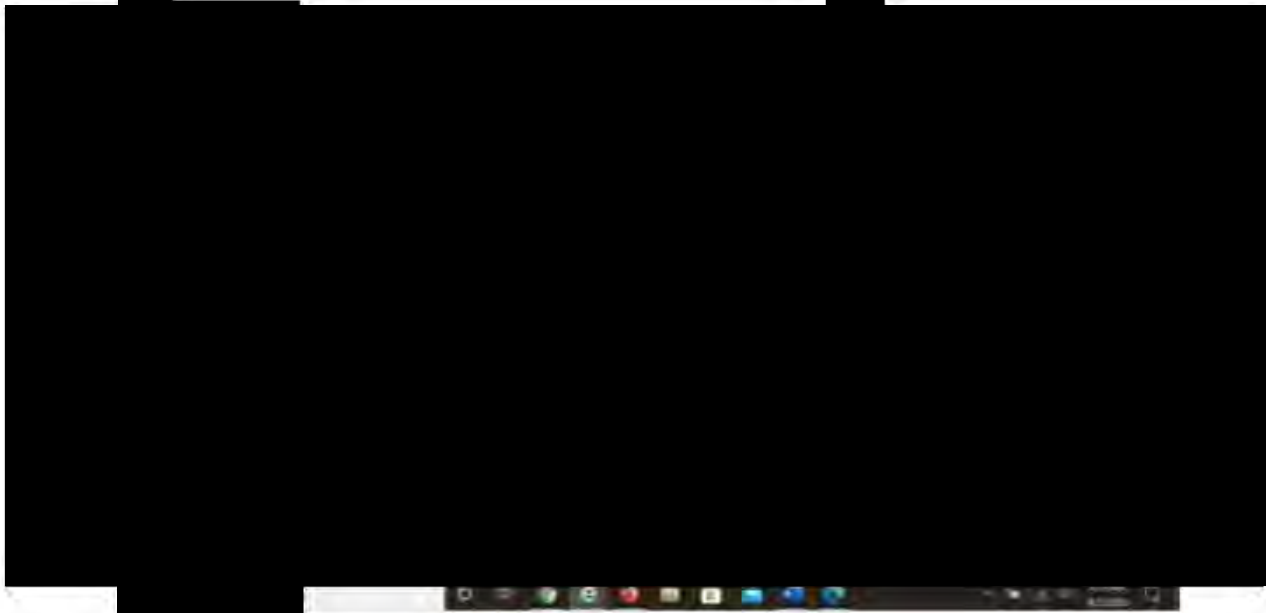
the truth. He was interested, however, when I mentioned the incident in my garage. I refused to let him run with that story, as I was at that time enshrouded in pain, shame, and acute feelings of powerlessness.

[REDACTED], aka [REDACTED] during the World of Warcraft botting years, last known whereabouts in

Current girlfriend = [would need to request her permission to provide her name]

While fabricating his backstory about ██████████, did an excellent job removing extensive postings, intricate YouTube videos, forums, and other information about his very long-term, extremely time-consuming, and more often than not tax evading days in the botting world against Activision Blizzard's World of Warcraft, where he was extremely well known ██████████. He made his way to the 10 Most Wanted list one year and attended BlizzCon (I will surely have an old photo or two) in California.

That said, I was able to readily find a few last remnants, with screenshots captured below:



■

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] has a long history of manipulating SEO and SEM, overall as well as particularly through Reddit.

Before [REDACTED] really took off and overlapping, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

His girlfriend shared with me recently how he called her during that time, when she was engaged to another man (and from whom [REDACTED] pressured her away), telling her how famous he was and was going to be and that she'd never be anything. This share mattered a great deal to me, as [REDACTED] used to talk incessantly with me back then about how good looking, talented, and famous he was and would be and that no one else understood what it was like to have to deal with sudden attention and fame, to the extent he quit school to move to Los Angeles to become a Hollywood star, and that I was a such a loser who had to work for a living, a dirty Jew, etc.

Whenever I would bring up these conversations with [REDACTED], he would aggressively gaslight me. For [REDACTED] to have brought up similar speech and claims was, to say the least, helpful however extremely disheartening, as [REDACTED] pattern is to show his most secret, dark, and abusive self only to the very few women in his life. Whenever I would bring up either the famous actor claims or the [REDACTED] years, he would gaslight me, as well. Same for when I brought up his years of tax evasion about which he used to brag to me. Same when I brought up anything of substance around accountability for his words or actions.

Any reporter or news outlet worth its salt could have conducted elementary-level research on the [REDACTED] backstory to trace his infamous [REDACTED] days with World of Warcraft to his [REDACTED] days to [REDACTED]. It does not take much work to unearth [REDACTED] trajectory in terms of creating hype, attention, and fake back stories around himself online through SEO, SEM, forums, subreddits, and the like.

Conclusion: In this document, in addition to providing context and background, I addressed 17 of the 98 stipulations in [REDACTED] amended pleadings. I am not qualified to form an opinion on the merits of the legal case, the merits of the academic debate, nor any other substantive considerations related to this matter. As the plaintiff's mother who knows the real back story [REDACTED], I felt, at long last, compelled to come forward.

(F) Emails I sent to *The New York Times*, CNN, and to others [REDACTED]

The news media was equally played by and complicit in my son's undertakings.

from: Althea
Azef [REDACTED]
to: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
date: Feb 11, 2021, 2:03 PM
subject: Reporter [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] coverage &
attributions to me
mailed- gmail.com
by:

To *The New York Times*:

[REDACTED] you published a widely distributed, poorly researched piece on my son, [REDACTED] and the company he had most recently founded, as well as his purported backstory. Although much of the piece was based on outright fabrication, I am now (at long last) writing (1) with particular regard to me, his mother, as mentioned in the piece as follows, (2) as well as the highly disturbing phone call I had with [REDACTED] following its publication.

Excerpts from the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] article in *The New York Times* read as follows:

[REDACTED]

Sentence one of the quoted material: He did not tell his mother, me, then. I knew about his long history of media manipulation spanning years, as well as how he fabricated his backstory about [REDACTED] and then in the media. I read the article initially because, at that time, I was a subscriber to that particular (tabloid) weekly magazine. When I asked [REDACTED] in person at a restaurant about that earlier piece (in the magazine), specifically why it was filled with such complete untruths, he replied, "You know how the media is. You can't control what they're going to say or make up." From early on (and spanning far earlier than his [REDACTED] company days), [REDACTED] could create any untruthful backstory about himself and have it spun

[REDACTED]

in Reddit, YouTube, and in other media outlets. (See the attached document for a history of doing so and re: various and sometimes illegal endeavors, as well as a history of threatening litigation).

Sentence three of the quoted material: I am his mother, and I have never been supportive of (1) his long history of fabricating lies about himself, (2) about the fabricated backstory to [REDACTED], nor of his (3) his long history of bullying, intimidation, and other matters.

When this piece was published by *The New York Times*, I fell into an even deeper level of shock and depression than I had by earlier news coverage of my son's so-called backstory. Since being a young girl, I held up your publication as an almost holy tome. The same has not been true since.

Notably, I contacted the reporter *within one week* of his piece appearing in your publication. He shared with me on that call that he was intimidated by [REDACTED], feeling both bullied and threatened. He shared that he was "forced" to sign an NDA by [REDACTED]. He shared that [REDACTED] forbade him from contacting either me to substantiate claims made. He shared, too, that he had never felt so "controlled by" a subject.

I asked him, the reporter, if these facts should not have raised red flags for him. He just laughed in response. I asked what his editor would say. Again, he remained defiantly unconcerned.

In the case of making attributions to me, no one, not once, contacted me to fact check. Period. And when I pressed the reporter on why he did not contact me, why he had not fact even attempted to substantiate any so-called fact, he shared that [REDACTED] was intense and intimidating. He, the reporter, didn't want to be sued by [REDACTED], as he described it. He, your reporter, also shared that he relied only on past media coverage to perform any required fact checks. He listed a few of the media outlets (including the aforementioned one).

Such reliance does not constitute fact checking.

When I hung up with [REDACTED], I was stunned. One would expect more from *The New York Times*. One would expect some accountability, too, once a reporter heard *directly from the source* of attribution and quoted material that such was not true.

The only time the journalist that you paid seemed actually interested in the discussion, in fact, was *not* when I told him that the purported backstory [REDACTED] was completely fabricated and that evidence of such was easily discoverable (i.e. please see the attached document, in which there is a well documented history from being [REDACTED] on World of Warcraft, part of a botting scheme, to garnering media attention for being an extra [REDACTED] [REDACTED], among other long-lasting, highly intricate schemes), but when I shared that just months before, I could have experienced great bodily harm or death by my son's hand. I shared that [REDACTED] was a heavily armed but unstable young man and that I could have been killed in my garage by one of his guns. That -- a potentially sensationalist headline -- is what captured the so-called journalist's attention. Not that what he had written was unsubstantiated, untrue, and harmful. He wanted his next attention-grabbing story, and I was not in any frame of mind to provide it, let alone processed the trauma of it all.

Since that time, I learned just this past summer that my son was swindling his long-term, live-in girlfriend for a continuous period of time financially, as well as in other ways. When I absorbed what she shared with me, thought back to what I learned was an engrained pattern of taking advantage of women, and many other considerations, I realized I had to come forward to the party he was suing for defamation. I consider this suit to be one for material gain and greater notoriety in the press, rather than on stipulations grounded in actual fact. There is a six-digit campaign to fund this baseless litigation (i.e. he outright lies in his pleadings) and I realized, taking many things into consideration, that my long-term silence was very possibly hurting others. The longer my son's pattern of manipulation, lies, threats of lawsuits, and other bad acts went unchecked, the more others could suffer damages, financial and otherwise.

After reaching out to the subject of that litigation and requesting she provide me with her counsel's contact information, I reached out to him. For that reason, I am cc'ing him, [REDACTED], on this email to your publication so that (1) he will be made aware of what I'm about to share with you and (2) because the document I sent to him in confidence has somehow made its way on to the Internet (although not published with the email that accompanied it). I have seen the document on two sites, but one has evidently removed it. I am not sure if [REDACTED] was aware, and I am in this email sharing this finding.

It is unprecedented for the mother of a plaintiff in a defamation suit to reach out to opposing counsel. As such, [REDACTED] sent a professional investigator to research and to meet with me this past summer. He, too, is cc'd herein, as I felt that would only be fair. As well, I will share that I hold a current U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Secret security clearance, another indicator of the level of background investigation that has been conducted on me.

I am sharing this document with *The New York Times*, also in confidence, so that you may fully appreciate the extent to which the so-called reporting carried out by your journalist (or stringer, as the case might be but, in either case, by an agent of your organization) was so deeply off the mark.

Please do not hesitate to reach me directly should you like to discuss this matter or to address the accountability issue, as well as how often your editorial staff (and/or stringers) is/are bullied and threatened into creating trumped up press coverage.

Sincerely,
[My name, phones, and email were here]

from: Althea Azeff [REDACTED]
to: cnn.feedback@cnn.com,
community@cnn.com
date: Mar 30, 2020, 7:38 PM
subject: Still awaiting reply: [REDACTED] story on
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

mailed- gmail.com
by:

I wrote months ago, within 24 hours of CNN airing the spot on [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] As indicated in that earlier email, I am his mother. I raised him.

No one has replied to me. No one fact checked a single assertions including, among many other erroneous claims, that he knew his way around a computer by four years old, let alone the far more fantasy-inspired assertions made. A person cannot make claims about his childhood or back story without corroboration or fact finding. The lies upon lies pile up year after year of coverage done with zero fact-finding. CNN piled on at minimum of four new angles and outright lies.

I reached out to *The New York Times* stringer after he ran an above-the-fold 1A story, also without fact checking. He shared with me (verification is easy to provide) that [REDACTED] (1) forced him to sign a non-disclosure and (2) that he would "sue" him had that (stringer) reporter checked with [REDACTED]'s parents on his back story. The reporter informed me that he felt bullied and antagonized. This is NOT journalism, nor is what [REDACTED] aired, how she collected "facts" on the story, and her complete lack of fact-finding re: assertions made about the backstory.

As the party who was personally harmed by your story (emotionally, psychologically, and financially), I am writing this one last time before taking legal action. [Note that, by this point, I had not intended any but, taking a page from my own son's playbook, tested to see if threatening such would elicit a much-desired response. None came.]

Kindly have someone reach out to me soon. I no longer have the patience to await your now long-delayed reply.

Althea Azeff
[contact information omitted]

from: Althea Azeff [REDACTED]
to: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@coventbridge.com
date: Feb 3, 2021, 8:58 AM
subject: [REDACTED] Feb. 1 and Feb. 2 tweets
mailed-by: gmail.com

[REDACTED] and Mr. Bernstein:

I am wondering, please, if I can help in any way concerning the rather disturbing information [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] tweeted this week. Reeling from the possibility that the perpetrator could very

well have been my son, please understand that I am willing to assist in any and all ways to help [REDACTED] identify her assailant.

Note, too, that I sent a text to my son's girlfriend, requesting that she please read the tweets. I've not heard back from her (and remain unclear whether she has reconciled with him).

Please advise and thank you.

Althea Azeff
[contact information omitted]

I learned in winter of 2021 that my son had caused a [REDACTED], to shutter/close, as well as bullied from it "substantial" money damages and a written apology. As always, my son did not have to pay for the litigation he instigated against this former news outfit. And, revelatory to me (and, I presume, to his girlfriend), he came into this "substantial" amount of bullied-for, non-earned money while purporting, to her, that he could not afford to contribute – at all – to their monthly mortgage payments or other expenses.

from: Althea Azeff [REDACTED]
to: [REDACTED]
date: Feb 3, 2021, 10:01 AM
subject: Confidential inquiry about [REDACTED] mother
mailed: gmail.com
by: [REDACTED]

My name is Althea Azeff, and I am the mother of [REDACTED].

I came across your article and wanted to know if we can chat.

Please be advised that (1) my son has not spoken to me since November 2019 (when I found out about certain very bad behavior he carried out against his live-in girlfriend) and that (2) I came forward this past summer, 2020, with information directly on point to the (in my opinion) wrongful and malicious lawsuit he instigated against [REDACTED]. I provided her retained counsel with a document I wrote that refutes many of the claims he makes about his personal backstory (and as he stipulated in his legal pleadings), the backstory of his company, and other matters. In that document, I put forth, too, the reasons I think [REDACTED] was litigating against the female neuroscientist and the (in my opinion) illegitimate manner in which he was raising 6-digit sums to finance this litigation.

I had no idea he sued you and/or your former organization, as well, and, had I known, I would have come forward to you, particularly once I learned about some very uncomfortable truths about him this past summer, as shared with me by his girlfriend.

With the direct information I had and have about his life (i.e. the history of his actual endeavors, history of other Internet sensationalist undertakings, in general, and that refute his [REDACTED] backstory), and the information that came to light throughout 2019 and 2020, I very unfortunately am now keenly aware of what an all-out conman, bully, and criminal he is. Whereas I had thought for years that I was the sole target of his bullying, threats, and other bad acts (in fact, and as I shared with one reporter, I could have died in the Spring of 2016 in my garage by [REDACTED] who was armed with a firearm), I can no longer stay silent in the fear, shame, and often paralysis of disbelief in which I've been groping my way through the past many years. When pieced together, the actual facts about my son are rather chilling.

Because my adult son has so skillfully manipulated the media (and the Internet) for many years now, including having threatened a stringer with litigation at *The New York Times* if that reporter reached out to me or to his father to fact check allegations made about his (fake) backstory that he alleges started as a child, as that stringer shared with me when I called him on false information in an above-the-fold 1A sensationalist piece, I believe that your experience might have also been rather unpleasant.

If there is any way that I might bring to light the actual truth about him, his actions, his history of being what I call litigation-happy, a bully, a con artist, a tax cheat, a general fraudster, an all-out misogynist, an anti-Semite, and the like, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. Despite very serious mental health diagnoses ██████████ remains heavily armed (four guns and an assault rifle of his own, as well as possibly a fifth gun taken from his girlfriend) and remains a threat in terms of silencing reporters, scientists, and women within his personal sphere.

Typically these threats are through words, but I am starting to suspect the dangers are more real-life and physical than I heretofore was able to understand in full. [REDACTED] tweets this week, for instance, have me very worried about actions he or someone affiliated with him may have taken against her in real life.

Sincerely,
Althea Azeff
[contact information omitted]